

GOSPEL LESSONS
AND
LIFE HISTORY

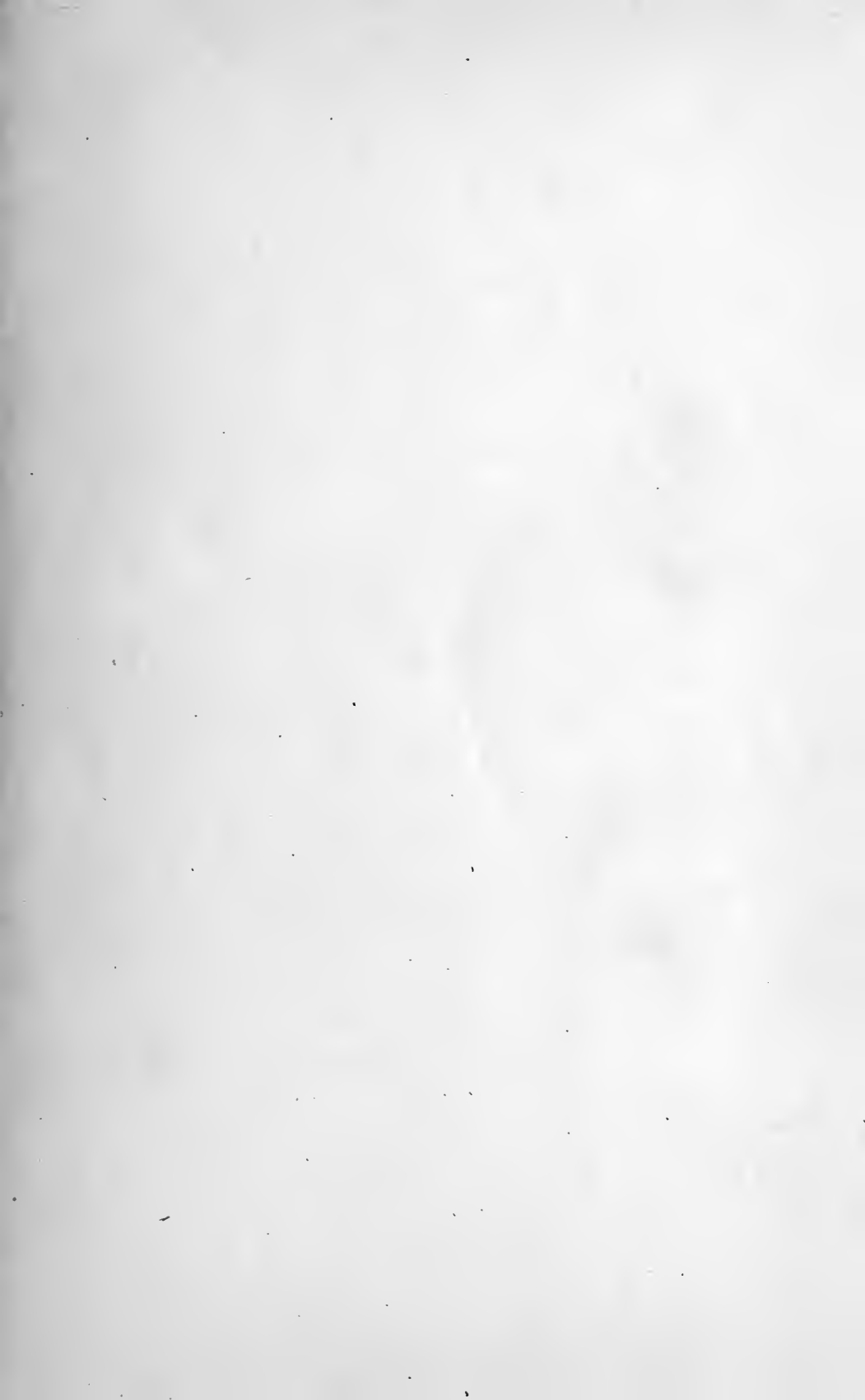


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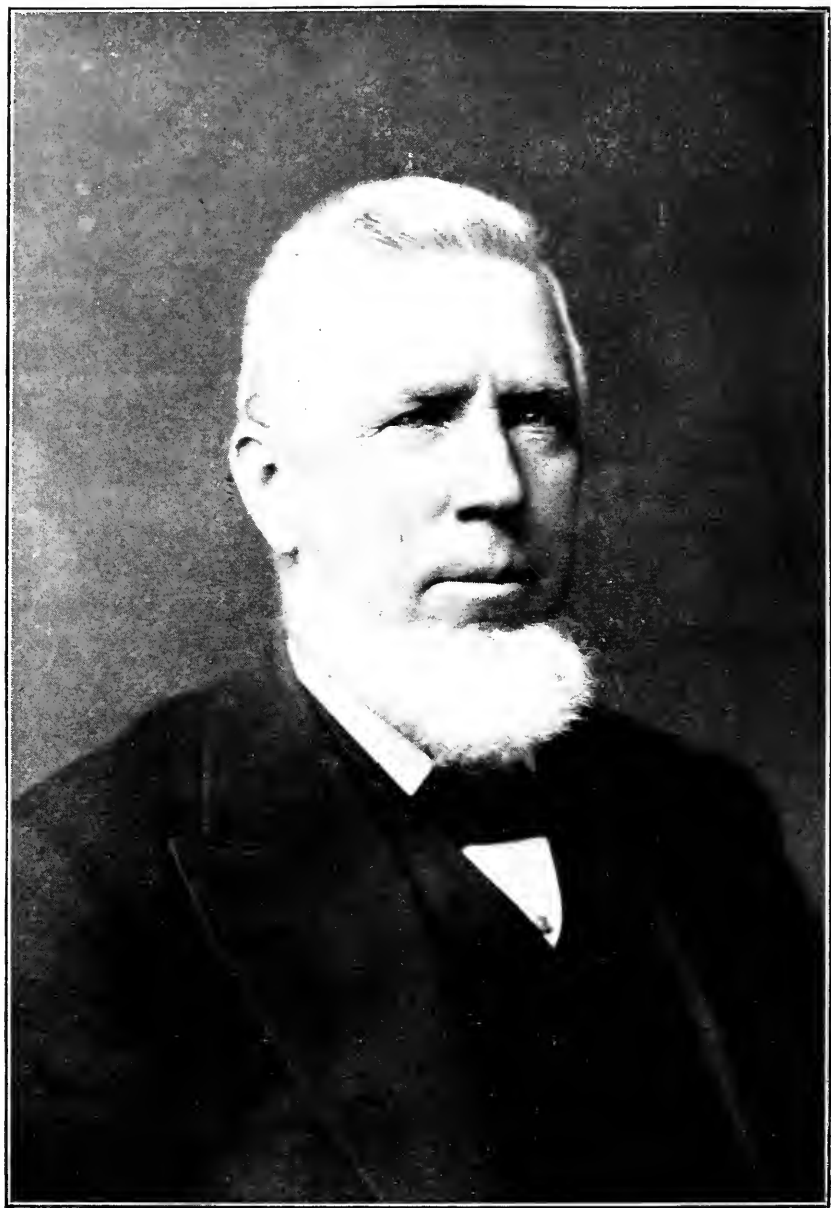
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E. G. SEWELL.

GOSPEL LESSONS

AND

LIFE HISTORY.

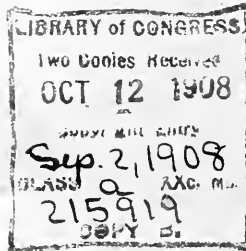
By

E. G. SEWELL,
COEDITOR OF THE GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

"The entrance of thy words giveth light."
(Ps. 119:130.)

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
MCQUIDDY PRINTING COMPANY.
1908.

BX 7094
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INTRODUCTION.

We send forth this volume with but one single claim in its behalf, and that is that its teaching is in harmony with the word of God. It must stand or fall upon its merits. If in harmony with God's word, it will stand the ordeal of criticism while time may last. If not in harmony with that word, it will fail, and ought to fail.

The quotations of scripture made in it are partly from the Authorized Version and partly from the American Standard Revised. Where there are decided differences, attention is generally called to the difference. Nineteen of the twenty-four chapters are purely on Bible themes, while the other five chapters are historical. The subjects of conversion and of the Christian life are presented at some length.

If the brethren are satisfied that the teaching is scriptural and calculated to do good, we hope they will aid us in its circulation and assist us in putting it into the hands of those who may be most benefited by reading it. We shall not likely stay here to work personally much longer; so we put out this volume, hoping it may be a means of accomplishing good when this tongue and pen shall work no more.

E. G. SEWELL.

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CHAPTER I.

The Bible What It Claims to Be.

The word "Bible" is of Greek origin—"Biblos" meaning "The Book." It is found in the New Testament, as that is the part of the book originally written in Greek. The first sentence in the New Testament is: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Then the genealogy of Christ is given as recorded in the Old Testament, from Abraham down to his mother, Mary, in the first chapter of Matthew. The third chapter of Luke gives the genealogy from Mary back to Adam, "the son of God." Thus the Bible traces the origin of the human race back to Adam, which is the only reasonable account ever given of the origin of man. All other efforts to account for the existence of man and of the world are fabulous as compared with the Bible. The first sentence Moses wrote in his part of the Bible was: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is one of the sublimest sentences he ever wrote. It unravels and forever settles the mysterious question of the origin of the physical universe. It puts to shame all the mythological claims as to the origin of things, and puts it upon a basis at once plausible and believable. It introduces God as creating the universe, without a word to prove that God is or that he was able to do so much. To have begun with arguments as to the

existence of God or his ability to create a universe would have been to create doubts on both these momentous questions; but to put it as it is, is God-like in its length and breadth and depth and height.

We know the universe exists. But whence came it? What Moses said in the first sentence of his five books is the only unquestionable answer ever given. Admitting that God exists, there can be no question of his ability to create the heaven and the earth; and that he does exist is abundantly evidenced by the actual existence of the universe we see all about us. In all the nearly six thousand years the earth and man have existed, not a ray of light has reached us as to their origin, except through Moses. If we do not admit that God exists, the origin of the universe and of ourselves is wrapped in impenetrable darkness, and will so remain. There is no light to come from any other source on these matters. Our eyes are closed, as by blind fate, and will remain so unless we admit that God is. If we admit that, the origin of the world and of man is as plain as any problem that exists. The man that rejects the existence of God forever shuts himself out from any possible light as to his origin or destiny. Denying the existence of God is an utter negation of all light and of every avenue of information as to the origin of things. To deny that God is, is to deny that the earth, the heavens, or man were created. There could be no creation without a creator, and no design in anything without a designer. The universe is a dark blank, with the idea that there is no God, and no possibility for light on anything that exists. The man that shuts out the idea that God is, shrivels

himself up into a bundle of utter and hopeless ignorance, from which it is impossible for him to extricate himself. No man that denies the existence of God can possibly prove that he is anything more than a mere animal or that there is any more for him after this life than there is for a parrot. All that we know about the difference between man and the beasts of earth is learned from the Bible, which purports to be a revelation from God. But if there be no God, the Bible is a fraud; there exists no supreme Being to reveal anything.

But why does any man say there is no God? Does that idea elevate any one? Does it make anybody wiser or better or happier? Does it make better citizens, better homes, better husbands or wives? Look at the heathen world, where there is no knowledge of God. Among them there is no light, no civilization, no true honor, virtue, or sense of justice. With them might makes right. They fear their laws and the officials that execute them, and fear those who have more physical power and authority than themselves. Beyond this there is nothing to restrain them. Their own fleshly impulses, desires, and aspirations are the guides as to what they do. An enlightened and trained conscience by scriptural instruction is wholly unknown among the heathen. They have neither appreciation nor regard for the rights of others. Their own will and wish are their law, unless restrained by laws and forces they dare not violate. It is true, a few heathen nations have opened their doors to civilized influences and have caught some better ideas by contact with civilized people. But not so where no trace of Bible civilization has ever gone.

It is a matter of historical fact that where Bible teaching has never gone there is no civilization, no social life that is worth the name, nor any of those tender offices that so sweeten life where Bible civilization reigns in the hearts and lives of the people; and if the Bible were all dropped out and all its inspired teaching obliterated, this dark and rugged sort of heathen life would soon be the condition of the whole world. Is this state of things something to be desired, instead of Christian civilization and that purity of heart and life that abound in Christian lands to-day?

But this is only a part of what is lost by denying the existence of God and discarding the Bible. Every incentive that appeals to the heart for a pure and holy life goes with the departure of the Bible and the Christian religion. The grosser passions become the ruling incentives, and, after a coarse and degraded life, men die and disappear like beasts, to know and be known no more. Is this the sort of prospect that inspires men in this Bible land to deny the existence of God and to trample the light of his truth under foot? Such is the only prospect and outcome for men when they deny the existence of God and the truth of the Book of all books. This is all any man can look for that denies the existence of a supreme Being that created man and the universe. It cannot be that any sane man would prefer this to the grand and beautiful life and glorious existence hereafter of a faithful Christian. There is but one thing imaginable that could induce any man in a land of Bibles and of the Christian religion to do such a thing, and that would be to avoid submission to

the restraining influences of the word of God, and to have excuse for free and full indulgence of the flesh and to lead a sordid life. This is done, too, at the awful risk of being mistaken about the existence of God and of being cast into hell at last with all the nations that forget God. This verifies the statement of Holy Writ that "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Surely none other, in view of all the Bible reveals and all it promises to the pure and holy, could be so rash as to do such a thing.

But to those that believe in God and regard the Bible as a revelation from him, it is the most wonderful book ever written. It unlocks the great storehouse of God's great wisdom and knowledge, and gives in unmistakable words the origin of the physical universe and the origin of man, who, in the language of God's Book, is "fearfully and wonderfully made." It informs us of the beginning of time and of its terrific end, and all the reliable history we have of this world and of the generations of men for over three thousand years. It gives us the only tangible account of the flood extant in all the world, and why it was brought, which was the great sinfulness of the human race.

The Bible is the channel, and the only channel, through which God speaks to man, and by it he will judge the world at the last day. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Heb. 1: 1, 2.) He spoke to the Jewish people through Moses and the proph-

ets; but the world was about twenty-five hundred years old when Moses wrote. Although it was so long after creation before any part of the Bible had been written, yet the part which Moses wrote is perhaps the oldest written document extant at the present time. The other parts of the Old Testament were written from time to time till about four hundred years before the Christian era. So the whole Bible was completed in a little more than fifteen hundred years.

One of the great wonders of this Book, and especially the Old Testament, is that it was written in parts, and by different men, so far apart in time that there was no possible chance for any collusion or plotting together as to what should be written so as to form an agreement to make no contradiction in different parts, and yet to make all the different parts harmonize. Yet it is a fact that these writers do harmonize perfectly as to the matters about which they wrote. Neither as to historical fact nor as to teaching is there any material or irreconcilable conflict. Such a thing would be impossible by uninspired men. But those writers were guided by an unseen and all-wise Power, which guided them infallibly into the truth in what they wrote, showing that all these writers were guided by the same hand, and that it was a divine hand. This one feature of the Bible is enough to prove it divine. It would be a miracle as great as the creation of a world for as many writers as were engaged on the Bible, in different ages, in different sections of the country, and on different themes pertaining to the will of God and the duties of men, to stand without conflict in what they wrote.

There were many prophecies written concerning the Messiah and what he should accomplish, so differently expressed that, until fulfilled, they would have seemed to be spoken of different personages and different events. Moses records prophecies made to Abraham, differently expressed, thus: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," and, "In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed." Then Moses himself uttered a prophecy concerning the Savior that was so different from those given to Abraham that they could hardly have been recognized as referring to the same person: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. . . . I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. 18: 15-19.) These prophecies seemed to speak of different persons and of different things, and before Christ came could not have been identified as referring to precisely the same person and the same event. But since Christ came, it can easily be understood that all those prophecies were completely fulfilled in him, and not a jar or discord between them. These things are interesting to study and wonderfully satisfactory as evidences of the divine origin of the precious words of eternal truth. If the Old Testament had been written by uninspired men, they would never have thought of attempting to utter any such prophecies;

they could not have known anything about such a Person or such a Teacher of the word of God as Jesus was. Hence nothing of the sort could possibly have been written by uninspired men. How wonderfully the Book of God is bolstered up by its own evidences of its divine origin! The more one studies the different parts of the Bible and the ages in which it was written, and the wonderful instruction therein given, the more thoroughly will he be convinced of its inspiration.

The Old Testament gives the ancestry of the Messiah and the preparation of the world for his advent into it, besides volumes of the most interesting history the world ever read. In the meantime it shows that mortality, death, and all the sufferings of disease and decay in man were brought on by his own sins; that wars, pestilences, famines, blights, and all sorts of disasters to crops and to human life generally were brought on in the same way; that Abraham was called out from his country and kindred and from their idolatry, that he might be trained into faithful service to God, become the father of the Jewish nation and the great ancestor of the Messiah, the Savior of sinners. Very largely the Old Testament is filled up with the history of the Jewish people, their variegated lives all spotted and blurred with sin, with chastisements such as few people of this world have ever suffered. Yet part of their history shows that the Jews were the best and most enlightened people the world ever saw till the Christian religion began its great "work of faith and labor of love." The Bible has the greatest variety of history that was ever written—history of wars, with all their calamities and suffer-

ings; the history of peace and prosperity; the history of contentment and happiness such as no nation of the world enjoyed in those times, except the Jews. Their history shows vividly the hand of God among them, both in their calamities and in their goodness and uprightness, in their elevation of heart and life above all the nations that surrounded them in those olden times.

The Jewish people during the fluctuations of their history produced many of the noblest and best men the people of those countries and times ever saw, while they also produced many of the most wicked and corrupt men known in any country round about them. The Jews were a most wonderful and remarkable people. When they were good, they showed the power of God's word, even under the most unfavorable circumstances, to elevate people as nothing else under the heavens could do. When they were bad, they showed how the superior enlightenment of God's word can be turned into much greater evil than among nations that did not enjoy the light of God's truth. These things show the hand of God—show an elevation and civilization that no other nation of those times could possibly reach; proving beyond a peradventure the superiority of the word and laws of God over man's wisdom and laws, and that the Old Testament is therefore from God, and that his word even then could do for men that would yield their hearts and lives to its divine instruction, more than all the wisdom of this world combined. Among the good men of the Jewish nation, we mention such men as Abraham (the father of those people), Moses, Caleb and Joshua, Gideon and Samuel; among the kings,

David, Hezekiah, and Josiah; among the prophets, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel. There is no record to show that nations outside of the Jews ever produced any such men. In fact, the best evidence of the truth of the Bible to be found in all this world is the Bible itself. The tree is known by the fruit it bears.

Another interesting feature of the Bible along the line of the evidence of its inspiration is the perfect fairness and impartiality in which it represents the dealings of God with men. The Bible gives historical accounts of God's dealings with all sorts of men—the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the bond and free, from the poorest servant to the grandest hero, with not a shade of partiality shown toward any. When the masses of Israel, from the poorest to the richest, rebelled against God in refusing to go up and possess the land of Canaan, the Lord dealt with all precisely alike. He doomed every one to the very same fate. He dealt with all according to their deeds. They were all rebels against him alike, and he passed the same sentence on all. All the rebels were to wander in the same wilderness till they should die. Forty years, full time to bring the death of all the rebels, were allotted as the time. They wandered the time out, and all the rebels of every grade and class were dead. Caleb and Joshua, who did not sin, and the young, who had not engaged in the rebellion, were all preserved and all permitted to enter the promised land. The shrewdest infidel in the world cannot see a shadow of difference or partiality in the case of a single one of these rebels. They all went down under the same sentence. Moses and Aaron

were among the innocent when the sentence was passed. Moses was still their great leader, their hero, and Aaron the high priest. The weary years of this sad wandering wore on, while the rebellious ones were rapidly dropping out, until the forty years were drawing toward their close, Moses still a great and good man. Trouble after trouble had come; Moses and Aaron still held to their integrity. But one sad occasion came for them. A great uprising came from the people on account of having no water to drink, and they raised a great murmuring against Moses and Aaron as they were thus suffering from thirst. Moses and Aaron went to the Lord about the matter, and he gave them specific directions what to do to obtain water for the people. They started out all right to obey these commands, but committed some bad errors before they got through. They left out one plain, positive command, and added two items God had not commanded; and God, on account of these things, denied them the privilege of leading the people into the land he had promised them, and doomed both these men to die outside of that goodly land.

Thus these great leaders were punished for their sins just as the poorest of the host they led. There never was any partiality with God in dealing with men. God was indeed no respecter of persons; he was a respecter of characters, but not of persons. No such impartiality can be found among any of the heathen kings or potentates the world ever saw. Men were judged by their deeds, not by their wealth, nor by their grade or standing among men. This is a principle so far above what humanity unaided by revelation has ever done that it shows be-

yond a peradventure that the God of the Bible is just the being it represents him to be, and that he is the author of that most wonderful volume. No wisdom ever belonged to uninspired man that could produce such a book as the Bible, and no mere earthly ruler ever dealt with men upon the principles the God of the Bible has always done.

We may, therefore, be fully assured when we read the pages of this, the most remarkable book in all the world, that it is of divine origin, and that the God it represents is the prime author of it; that he created the universe; that he created man, gave him his superior intelligence and a soul that will live on when the body dies, and may live eternally in heaven if faithful to God in this life.

CHAPTER II.

The New Testament: Its Great Importance to Us.

While the Old Testament is of untold value and importance to us, the New Testament is of much greater importance. It is the book through the guidance of which all are to be saved, if saved at all, from the establishment of the kingdom of Christ till time shall end. It is the grandest revelation ever given to mortals of earth. As compared with the Old Testament, it is "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." (Heb. 8: 6.) The old covenant was a series of carnal ordinances. "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." (Heb. 9: 9, 10.) "The time of reformation" meant the coming of Christ and the establishment of the new covenant. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building. . . . For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal

Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Verses 11-14.) Truly this new and everlasting covenant is a wonderful blessing offered to all the generations of this world from the first Pentecost after the sufferings of Christ on the cross till time shall end.

We have great reason to be thankful that we were born under this covenant and that our lots were cast in this Bible land, in which it is our privilege to read and hear and learn how to become Christians, and to live the Christian life through all the rest of our days in hope of an eternal home in glory. While the law of Moses was incomplete in many respects, the new covenant covers all the necessities of mortality. It cultivates the heart and the life in a sense unknown to the law of Moses. The law did not elevate, soften, and purify the heart as does the new covenant. The law was chiefly a fleshly institution, involving fleshly ordinances pertaining to the fleshly man, while the new covenant is spiritual and appeals to the inner man, and is intended to so educate and control the inner man as to lead it to control the outer man, the flesh, and keep that in subjection to the will of God. While the law of Moses was ushered in amid the terrors of Mount Sinai, making the people tremble and ask Moses to go up and talk with the Lord and to bring them his word, the new covenant was planned in heaven and brought about by the grandest exhibition of love and tender mercy ever manifested to the inhabitants of earth. While the law was arranged to keep its subjects in obedience by carnal ordinances and judgments, the gospel is in-

tended to kindle such a degree of love in the hearts of God's children as to lead them to do his will from the principle of love to him, and the eternal principles of right as set forth in the inimitable teaching of the New Testament, and as manifested in the pure and beautiful life of the Son of God.

All, therefore, should take an interest in reading and studying this precious volume in which are contained the eternal interests of the soul. And we may certainly read the New Testament with the very fullest assurance of faith that its divine records are true. Christ was a remarkable boy at twelve years of age, as given in this wonderful volume. He went with his parents to one of the annual feasts at Jerusalem, and remained, without their knowledge, in the city. When they had gone a day's journey, they found he was not with any of the crowd returning homeward, and they went back; and, after long search, they found him in the temple asking and answering questions with the doctors and lawyers, a most remarkable thing for a boy of his age and without any school education. But he returned home with them, and was subject unto Joseph and Mary, the Son of God as he was, and thus left an example of obedience to parents by all children to the end of time. While, as the Son of God, he thought it good to be in his Father's house about his Father's business, he meekly submitted to go home and be obedient to his mother, Mary, and his reputed father, Joseph.

At the age of thirty he went "from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him." (Matt. 3: 13.) Thus all men have in the Son of God, who was to be the Savior of sinners, a beautiful exam-

ple in yielding such a hearty obedience to his Father's will in thus submitting to this divine ordinance of baptism. The example is a sublime one, in the fact that he made that trip with the fixed purpose "to be baptized." He that would place a light estimate upon the importance of the ordinance of baptism needs to thoroughly study this divine example of Jesus in going so far to honor his Father in this divine ordinance, and carefully study the saying of Peter that Christ has left an example and that we should follow his steps, and settle the question as to how he can follow the steps of Jesus and not be baptized.

Then the circumstances attending the baptism of Jesus were most remarkable. When he had been buried in baptism in the Jordan and had come up out of the water, the heavens were opened unto him and the Spirit of God in the form of a dove descended upon him, "and a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased." (Mark 1: 11.) This was truly a sublime recognition of Jesus as the Son of God, and should deeply impress every soul that reads or hears it. This was the sublimest introduction and recognition that had ever been given to any one of this earth. Then his trip into the wilderness, and his wonderful triumph over the three temptations of Satan by simply appealing to and relying upon the word of God, is a striking example for us in more ways than one. It shows so beautifully how all can now overcome all temptations by studying the word of God, and by using and relying upon it as Jesus did, and also the importance of strong faith in God and his word.

Then the Sermon on the Mount was the most astonishing message that had up to that time ever been delivered to mortals of earth. It has stood the criticisms of nearly two thousand years unscathed, while its divine origin has never been doubted for one moment by any that admit the existence of God. The teaching of that sermon was so far above anything that any uninspired man had ever taught that it proves itself to be of divine origin beyond any reasonable controversy. The moral teaching of that sermon was such as no man had ever taught that had no inspiration from God. He taught principles in that sermon that fully and thoroughly apply in the gospel plan of salvation from the time one sets out to become a Christian, till the last act of service in the life the Lord's people are required to live until death shall take them away from earth. The first part of that sermon involves principles that belong to the whole matter of Christianity from the beginning to the end; and not one thing in all the blessings pronounced and the principles involved in it is in the least out of harmony with one single thing involved in them, with anything required in the gospel of Christ, from the matter of becoming a Christian to the end of the Christian life. It would have been impossible for any one to do these things without being full of the inspiring power of the Holy Spirit. There never was greater miraculous power manifested than was manifested by the Son of God in this Sermon on the Mount. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." (John 3: 34,

35.) Thus the Spirit and power of God were given so abundantly to Jesus that he could look forward over the whole gospel plan of salvation and know beforehand every feature of it and all the principles that would belong to it; and, therefore, he knew how to present in that wonderful sermon every principle that would be involved in the whole make up of the new and everlasting covenant, so as to harmonize perfectly with every item of it from its Alpha to its Omega. This power was as astonishing as that that made the worlds, and leaves us no doubt about the truth of the divinity of Christ, and the full inspiration of the whole matter of the covenant of grace. Hence this sermon of Jesus was one of the most sublime prophecies that was ever uttered, giving us a most beautiful picture of what the whole plan of salvation would be, years before the church, the kingdom of God and of Christ, was set up in the earth, and before anything like it had ever been seen on the earth.

That the history of Christ was written by the men whose names it bears and at the time claimed for it, is beyond reasonable controversy. It is also a fact that thousands of people that saw Christ and heard his teaching, witnessed the miracles he did, were still living when Jesus died and rose again, and were living when these things were recorded; and had they not been true, they would have been cried down at once, and their words could have gained no credence at all. Yet there are no records dating from the time that these things were published by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John that pretend to deny that Jesus was on earth at the time they say he was, nor that he did the miracles these

witnesses say he did, nor that he was crucified at the time they say he was, nor that he arose from the dead when they say he did. Hence these men have the floor to-day as true witnesses of all the matters they record about Jesus, the Son of God. We are, therefore, entitled to exercise full faith in what they record concerning all that Jesus said and did, from the time he entered upon his personal ministry till he ascended to his Father. Therefore we have the fullest testimony that Jesus was actually present on that mountain, and that he really spoke this, the most remarkable sermon that had ever been preached on this earth; and we can all see that everything said in that sermon harmonizes most perfectly with every word said in the New Testament to the end of Revelation. So when we read to-day what Jesus said, we are virtually hearing him talk, and should realize it as thoroughly as if he were here personally on earth now, and that we were hearing it from his own mouth. We are indebted to the four writers above named for the entire personal history of Jesus and all his personal teaching, and for the report of all his miracles, of his tragical death and his triumphant resurrection from the grave. The teaching of Christ as reported by these four men is the most interesting teaching that had ever been given to men.

Jesus himself, when at Nazareth, his old home, went into the synagogue, and the book of Isaiah was handed him, and he opened and read of himself as follows: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to

the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4: 18, 19.) This gives us a brief and figurative summary of the mission of the Son of God into this world, a brief statement of what he would do for the human race; that he would deliver them from their terrible bondage under sin, lift them out of their degraded thralldom under sin, and set the captives free. What a wonderful uplifting there would be if all who are bound down under the chains of sin, and in ignorance and superstition, would accept the glorious gospel of Christ, obey its pure and holy precepts, and allow themselves to be lifted up out of the snares and pollutions of sin, and be ennobled, elevated, purified, redeemed from all iniquity, and made the Lord's own peculiar people! Then indeed would the slaves to sin be unbound and the acceptable year of the Lord would be on; and, indeed, to all that have been willing to accept the teaching of the Son of God, the gospel of Christ, and then live out its heaven-taught principles, the acceptable year of the Lord has been on from New Testament times.

The full extent of this interesting prophecy of Isaiah was never understood and appreciated till Jesus came, fulfilled it, and its sublime teaching was manifested in and through the glorious gospel of Christ. Compare the most enlightened and Christianized people of the United States or of Great Britain with the benighted people of the earth where Christ and the gospel are unknown, or compare the best Christians of these countries with the proud-hearted scribes and Pharisees that rejected and crucified the Lord of glory, and you can-

not hesitate to say that, so far as the gospel has been embraced and lived out, Christ has done and is still doing all for a sinful, bruised, and ruined world that this beautiful prophecy indicates. Jesus is indeed a purifier and refiner to all that accept and practice his teaching.

What a teacher is Jesus! One of his broad maxims that belongs to the whole lifetime of the Christian as given in the Sermon on the Mount is: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets." (Matt. 7: 12.) This is an exceedingly strong presentation of a principle that will hold good in all our treatment of our fellow-men just so long as our associations last. No child of God is free from the principle stated in this sweeping expression till he dies. Not that this alone will prepare a man for heaven, but it covers an important field of duty. Socrates, Buddha, and Confucius had maxims they thought good, but put them in the negative like this: "Do not do unto others what you would not have done to you." This is so thoroughly negative that it kills out most of the doing. But Jesus puts it on the positive doing line: "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you." This covers all the ground, and ought to be cordially carried out by all true children of God. It shows a great degree of perfection to which all should strive to attain. It is undoubted evidence that a divine mind produced it. It is on a plane so much higher and purer than uninspired humanity ever reached that it undisputably shows its divine origin.

The parables of Jesus also are wonderful produc-

tions, while the lessons taught in them are sublime. They are put in such a plain, simple way that everybody, with the fully developed plan of salvation before them, can readily understand their meaning. The parable of the sower is an exceedingly interesting one. It presents the word of God as the seed of the kingdom of heaven. Plant a grain of corn in the earth, and, when it springs up, cultivate and attend to it, and it will produce several hundred more grains; and every one knows that the germ, the power to infallibly produce the same kind, was in the grain, the seed that was planted. So the word of the Lord, the gospel of Christ, sown in the heart of a sinner, cultivated and nurtured by him, will produce a Christian; and if faithful, he will be instrumental in producing others; and thus on and on the work will go, till hundreds—it may be, many thousands—may result from the gospel sown in one man's heart. How astonishing the multiplying powers of the word of the Lord, the saving power of the gospel of Christ! No one will ever know the good he may have done by receiving the gospel seed into an honest and good heart, which will develop him into a faithful Christian, who will be instrumental in bringing others into the fold of Christ, this side of the judgment seat and the home of the soul.

What a valuable book is the New Testament! We can give it but a touch in this short chapter. It informs us of that tender, touching love that gave us the precious Babe of Bethlehem, the miraculous Man of Galilee, the great Teacher of the Holy Land and of the historic Jewish people, the Hero of the mock trial, of the cross, and of the tomb;

the One who in these sufferings and triumphs gave us the plan of salvation by grace and the church of God; who overpowered death and the grave and opened up to us immortality and eternal life, and marked out to us the narrow way that leads to the pearly gates of the eternal city. What a wonderful volume, revealing to a perishing world such a flood of light, dissipating such a world of darkness, and showing to poor, sinful mortals of earth how to become pure, spiritual immortals, and to dwell with all the holy throng around the eternal throne in glory! Who would not love to read, study, understand, and follow such a volume—follow the meek, lowly One who gave up his life in the awful tragedy of the cross to provide blessings so pure, so desirable, exalting, and enduring, as the blessings of the glorious gospel of Christ? Nothing short of eternity will be long enough to give adequate praise and honor to God and the Lamb for blessings so inexpressibly sublime.

CHAPTER III.

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2: 15.) This instruction was given by Paul to a young preacher, and was certainly a timely reminder to be given any man that teaches the word of God, or to any man that wants to fully understand his own duty in the sight of the Lord; and this instruction is especially timely in these days of so many denominations and so many different and conflicting doctrines on conversion and many other themes connected with the work and worship of the church. It is a plain indication of the great importance of God’s word, and that God intends for the people to have it in its purity and in its proper order and application. To wrongly divide and apply the word of God is to pervert it and to make it teach things that God never authorized. There is one right division of the word, but many wrong ways to divide and apply it, and many ways to put in humanisms and false doctrines which God never intended to be taught, and which only lead people away from Christ, and not to him. The Bible is a good-sized book, in many parts and for many purposes. He, therefore, that would teach it correctly must study it—must study it in its many parts and

purposes to know how to rightly divide and apply it. The salvation of souls is the most important thing in all the world, and to handle and apply the word so as to mislead people and cause the loss of souls is an awful thing. To be the cause in any way of leading people into error and to blind them to any matter of plain truth, and to carry them off into things God never ordained and to cause them to stumble at the truth and wander into error and darkness and be eternally lost at last, is terrible sin. Hence, the above is an exceedingly important command.

The word of God may be so divided and applied as to become the doctrines and commandments of men, and may utterly make void the word of God, and cause people to follow men instead of Christ. The scribes and Pharisees had so far done this in the days of the Savior as to make void many of the commands of God in the law of Moses. They had gone so far with this that Jesus told them: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves." (Matt. 23: 15.) These Pharisees worked all sorts of schemes to palm off their misapplications of the word of God. In their applications of the word of God, when it suited them, they would exalt one passage to the skies and lower others as matters of no importance, and give passages they exalted precedence over passages they depreciated, thus so exalting some as to make them destroy others that might be in the way of their doctrines. As an example of this, one of the Ten Commandments was, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon

the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." (Ex. 20: 12.) This word "honor" comprehends obedience, support, or any sort of assistance they need, in ill health or old age. But the scribes and Pharisees exalted the matter of giving to the Lord, to the cause of God, clear above this command to honor parents, and killed it, by exalting the one to give to the Lord. In the New Testament we have an illustration of this. The scribes and Pharisees complained to Christ that his disciples disregarded the tradition of the elders in the matter of washing hands. "But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." (Matt. 15: 3-6.) In the expression of a son to his father or his mother, "It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me," it means: "I have already given what I might have given you, to the Lord." In the corresponding passage in Mark (chapter 7) it is put, "It is Corban"—that is, "given to God," what I might otherwise have given thee. All this means that if a son would give to God, put in God's treasury a liberal amount, he should be freed from obligations to his father's and his mother's necessities. Thus they overexalted one passage and underestimated

another that was just as important. Both were intended to be obeyed by the God who gave them.

In the Revised Version the text at the head of this chapter, instead of "rightly dividing," has "handling aright the word of truth." To handle aright the word of God would forever do away with such use of the word of God as the scribes and Pharisees made when they made one passage of the word of God destroy another. Handling the word of God aright would prevent religious people from ever exalting a matter of tradition, or of human wisdom, into the position of an ordinance of God, as those scribes and Pharisees did when they exalted the washing of hands into a matter of religious service, and reproved even the Son of God because his disciples did not observe it. That sort of handling of the word of God—to suppress one passage, as that of honoring parents, and overexalt and misapply passages concerning giving, and apply them in a sense God never intended, and then exalt a mere human custom into an act of religious service and try to enforce its observance—would make a mere toy of the Bible and destroy the whole thing so completely that its power and influence over men would soon be at an end; and yet the very same sort of thing is being done extensively with many things and in many ways in the New Testament. Baptism and prayer are both extensively taught and enjoined in the New Testament. Yet in what is usually known as the "prayer system of conversion," an office, or power, is given to prayer that God never intended and in a place that he never put it.

Those who practice that system so handle and misplace prayer as to entirely eliminate baptism from the conversion of the sinner and place it as a Christian duty, instead of in connection with the conversion and salvation of the sinner, where the Lord placed it. To misplace and misapply the word of God thus tends to destroy its power and influence. God never ordained prayer to take the place of, or to in any way interfere with baptism; and when it is thus placed and enforced, it becomes a human device, while God's authority is set aside, and the purpose, the design, of both ordinances is misplaced, and an utter failure made in "handling aright the word of God;" for God never placed prayer as a part of the sinner's conversion, nor did he ever place baptism as a Christian duty. Violent hands are, therefore, laid upon God's holy word whenever these misapplications are made. God placed faith in the gospel, repentance, and baptism as things the sinner is to do to entitle him to the promise of the remission of sins, while prayer has always been required at the hands of the child of God. While I would not say the sinner should not in any sense pray during his conversion, there can be no mistake in its being a perversion and misapplication to allow it to in any way interfere with baptism, and put it out of the place where God put it.

Prayer is not intended to take the place of, nor to in anywise interfere with, obedience to any other commandment. Prayer must not hinder the sinner one moment from obeying with full purpose of heart the commands to believe, to repent, and to be baptized. Whenever it does, God's authority is set aside and human authority is put in its place, and

the promises of God forfeited. If an unconverted man will go right on doing the will of God and only pray God's help in his obedience, I would not say that his prayer would be anything amiss to him. But whenever he so uses his prayer as to in any way set aside or take the place of one single command of God, he ruins everything, and puts a mere matter of human wisdom in place of God's divine arrangement. The same principle is true with a Christian. During his entire life he is positively required to always pray, and not to faint. But whenever he puts it in the place of one single command of God, he is mishandling, misapplying, the word of God, and trying to make one passage take the place of another, as did the Jews. In putting one command in the place of another, we assume to have greater wisdom than God and make void the commands of God by the doctrines of men. None of the commands of God are nonessential. Prayer is essential in its place and for its purpose. But if the Christian depends upon his prayer to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, or to send out the gospel to save sinners, and makes no effort toward doing these things, his prayer will be a failure and his Christian life a delusion and hypocrisy.

But while these are all ruinous to the proper handling and application of the word of truth, we must realize that there are many ways of hindering truth and of propagating error. Since the Bible comes to us in many parts, and these different parts intended to teach different things, it especially behooves those that would teach the Bible to read and study the different parts, so as to point out to the people the very things they need to learn.

Just upon the principle that a book on grammar is arranged with different lessons in different parts of the book, so the Bible has different lessons in different parts of it; and as the teacher of grammar must understand that branch of education so as to be able to direct beginners in what parts to study to get the different lessons to be learned and the order in which to learn them, so the teacher of the word of truth should be sufficiently familiar with the different parts of the inspired volume to know where to turn or to refer the learners to the parts from which to get what they desire to know. He should, in fact, be so familiar with the Bible and all practical matters of Christianity as to know just what part of the great Book to turn to, to teach that lesson; and as there are more lessons than one to be studied, he should know just where to find what he wants to teach, so as to be able to teach the very things the people need to know, and in the order in which the Lord intends they should be presented.

The five books of Moses are the first five of that wonderful collection of books called the "Bible." These begin with the grand work of creation. The first sentence is: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Not only the heaven and the earth, but everything that exists on the earth was created by the word and power of God. Moses was the first man that wrote anything that has come down to us. Hence this, so far as we know, is the first inspired oracle that was ever written, and the first satisfactory account ever written regarding the origin of this physical universe; and from then till now there has never been

a word of change suggested on that grand sentence. There has been no need of change. That first sentence was perfect, was complete, and nothing remained to be added. Immediately following this divine sentence is the account of what was done during the six days of creating and arranging things on the earth—of the sun, moon, and stars, and of the creation of man, and of the Lord resting from the great work which he had done. Then follows the history of men, in their generations, to the flood, to the folly at Babel, and on down to the death of Jacob and Joseph in Egypt. For information on all these things, we must read the book of Genesis. These histories have never been repeated to any extent. Allusions have been made elsewhere to many of the items given in this first book, but not the histories. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are mentioned incidentally many times; but to get their history, this unique book must be read. The garden of Eden, the flood, the history of the human race for about twenty-five hundred years, is found in the book of Genesis; so of necessity that book must be read to get these histories.

The book of Exodus is next. As its name indicates, it gives the delivery of the children of Israel from the hard bondage to which they had been so long subjected in the land of Egypt, the going out from that country and that bondage. Very many other things are introduced in that book, such as the giving of the Ten Commandments and other portions of the law of Moses, the gifts for and the building of the tabernacle and all the furniture pertaining to it, the inauguration of the tabernacle worship, and such like; but the departure, the

coming out, with all the miraculous events connected with that deliverance, made up all the first part of the book and gave it the name. These two books very forcibly illustrate the importance of the principle that the Bible is a book of many parts and many purposes to be accomplished. The five books of Moses make up a very wonderful part of the history of the world down to the death of Moses, telling much about the excessive sinfulness of many of the people, and the awful punishment and ruin that were visited upon their sins.

If we could spare space, it would be interesting to sketch much of the history of many of the other books of the Old Testament; but we are more immediately concerned about the Christian religion, the gospel plan of salvation, and how to find the way of salvation through Jesus our Lord. While there are many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the coming of Christ, the Christian religion is not developed in that book. Yet when I was a boy, the preachers appealed to the Old Testament almost as much as to the New Testament when preaching on the subject of conversion. One text that they quoted almost always when preaching on conversion was the following: "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." (Ps. 40: 2, 3.) This passage they applied to the matter of getting religion, the matter of the Lord speaking peace to their souls at the moment they supposed they received remission of sins. This was surely

a great blunder in the matter of rightly dividing and applying the word of truth. This psalm is evidently closely connected with the two psalms immediately preceding it. In these David appears to be complaining of some troublesome disease and praying God's blessings upon him, lest he should die and go hence. He also humbly confessed very serious sin, and prayed God to have mercy upon him. In the passage we quoted he is greatly rejoicing that the Lord had heard his cry, had lifted him out of his great affliction, and had forgiven him; but it has no sort of reference to the matter of conversion under Christianity, and it is a great mishandling and misapplication of the word of God to so apply it, and thus indicates the ignorance of those teachers of the Bible, in its proper division and application.

But the Christian religion is only given in prophecy and in types and shadows in the Old Testament. It is revealed in its plainness and fullness only in the New Testament, and that is where the proper division must be especially regarded. This book contains twenty-seven parts, and may be properly considered, first, in three grand and proper divisions. The first of these divisions is contained in the first four books—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These are largely taken up in history—the history of John the Baptist and his work, of Christ and his grand work, and of the twelve apostles under their first commission. This division may be considered as preparatory, getting things in readiness for the full establishment of the church of God, the kingdom of Christ. John came first into his ministry, made ready a people prepared for the

Lord, introduced the Son of God to Israel, and then pretty soon dropped out, and the Son of God and his prepared ones came to the front to make still further preparations for the coming kingdom, which was near at hand. For some three years and a half the personal ministry of Christ continued, proving himself to be the Son of God by many infallible proofs, and training his apostles for the grand work they were to do, and getting things in readiness for the strange tragedy of the cross. If any want undoubted proof that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Son of God, let them read these four books, together with the prophecies of the Old Testament. If these do not convince him, his case will be hard to reach. John says of the things he had recorded on this line: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." (John 20: 31.) This shows the real purpose of these four books. They are to identify and exalt Jesus first as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and then as the ascended Lord and Christ, where he is to reign as King till the time comes when he shall deliver up the kingdom to his Father, who shall be all in all. Thus these books are historical and preparatory. They are not intended to give the fully developed state of the kingdom, not intended to show people how to become Christians. It is true these four books give the last commission of Christ to the apostles; but the apostles themselves did not know how to apply this commission when it was given, and were told not to begin it till they should receive power from on high. So it is a matter of fact

that conversion, as we need to have it now, is not explicitly given in this first division of the New Testament.

The next division is the book of Acts, also written by Luke. This book contains the preaching of the apostles after the Holy Spirit had come upon them and had fully qualified them to preach the gospel, with all its specific demands, and to teach sinners just what to do to enter the fully developed state of the kingdom. On the very day the Spirit came upon them, the day of Pentecost, recorded in the second chapter of this book, the apostles began to preach the gospel as required in the last commission, preached it just as it was to go to the whole world to the end of time, and preached it just as the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. They preached it as it had never been preached before. Up to this time the kingdom of heaven, the church of God, and the death of Christ had always been spoken of as in the future. But on the day of Pentecost the death of Christ was presented as an accomplished fact, as was also his resurrection from the dead. Peter could say on that day, of Christ: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." These facts could not be proclaimed as having already occurred until after the crucifixion; but on this day they could say in truth that he had been crucified, had been raised from the dead. But from this day forward it was never preached any other way. On this day Peter

said for the first time: "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ." No one, until this sentence was uttered, was ever told to repent or to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, but from that day onward it has been the universal order. John's baptism was not done in any name so far as the record shows.

These things show clearly that a new order of things began on that day; but from this day there was never another change by the authority of God. So if we want to learn how people are to be converted now, we must begin with this chapter and study it and the rest of this book. We cannot find how people are now to be saved till we reach this chapter. I know, however, that people claim several items in the personal ministry of Christ as examples of becoming Christians now—such as the case of the sinful woman (Luke 7), the thief on the cross (Luke 23), and the publican (Luke 18). But all these occurred before Christ died, before his blood was shed for remission, before the gospel plan of salvation was prepared by which we are to be saved. If these persons were saved, which we will not argue now, they were not saved as we have to be saved. If saved at all, we have to be saved by the blood of Christ, which had not been shed when these persons were saved; and so we cannot be saved now as those people were. People have been saved in all the ages from before the flood up to the death of Christ, but none of them in the same way and on the same conditions they were saved on the day of Pentecost. Not one was ever saved that way till that day. All, therefore, that refer people to any case or incident before that

memorable day go too far back. They fail to rightly divide the word of truth, and run the whole matter of salvation into confusion. No man can go back and be saved by any institution or dispensation of things that existed before Jesus died on the cross. But if we come to the day of Pentecost, then everything is ready for the beginning of a new order of things. Christ had then been crucified, his blood had been shed, the great sacrifice had been made, and Jesus had ascended, where he was appointed to become "head over all things to the church." Hence, on the day of Pentecost was the full establishment of the new dispensation, the church of God, the kingdom of Christ on earth. This order of things was to last till the close of time. Hence, from that day all that have ever been saved at all have been saved as the three thousand were.

The conversions of that day were very simple and easy to be understood. The gospel facts that Jesus had died and had risen again were preached first; the people heard, understood, believed, repented, and were baptized, as directed by the Holy Spirit through Peter. In the next chapter the same gospel was preached again, and many more heard, believed, obeyed, and the number of the disciples became five thousand. All the way through Acts of the Apostles the same gospel was preached and the same obedience rendered. This is the only book in the Bible that gives specifically and in its proper order the whole matter of becoming Christians.

The third division of the New Testament includes the letters of the apostles to the churches and

parts of the book of Revelation. This division teaches the practical life of the Christian and the practical work and worship of the church, intended to thoroughly post the Christian in all things pertaining to his practical duties in the church, public and private. In these letters to the churches are many figurative allusions to the matter of becoming Christians. Some of these are very brief. But all of them agree perfectly with the plain, unfigurative presentation of conversion found in Acts of Apostles. The books preceding Acts lead up to and prepare us for the wonderful developments contained therein. The books succeeding it point back to that book as the basis of all the conversions of which they speak, making that book a kind of keystone to the grand arch of salvation, thus making the New Testament a full and complete presentation of the whole plan of salvation from its inception to its consummation, showing every step of advancement from the time the sinner hears the gospel and becomes a Christian until his preparation in purity and holiness is complete and he is ready to step off into the eternal home of the soul.

What a wonderful book is the New Testament! Proclaiming in such beauty the wonderful love which brought Jesus from above; which led him through a life of the greatest usefulness the world ever saw, led him to the suffering scenes of the cross, to the tomb, back to life again, and to heaven to prepare a place for his loving followers; promising to come again to take them to himself forever. Who would not love to read and follow the guidance of such a book, do the loving service it requires, and draw continual happiness from its pre-

cious promises? This precious book called the "New Testament" gives us the only specific and definite information we have in regard to the great beyond, toward which we are moving every moment of our lives; while the book of Revelation, besides its plain, practical lessons, gives us, through prophecies, much of the future conditions of the church and the dark times of suffering and ruin yet to befall the people of this world. It is to be feared that few of us appreciate and use this remarkable book so as to secure all the promises it makes to the faithful. The New Testament thus divided and applied becomes one of the plainest books ever written, showing what God has done and what we must do in order to be saved from our past sins and in the eternal home beyond the dark river.

CHAPTER IV.

The Gospel of Christ: What Is It?

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.” (Rom. 1: 16.) The meaning of this statement is a matter of the profoundest interest to lost sinners. The gospel is God’s power for salvation to every creature that believes it. We will not consider in this chapter the matter of believing, but rather what it is that is to be believed. The word “gospel” signifies “glad tidings.” Any sort of a message of salvation ought to be glad tidings to lost sinners. John the Baptist preached gospel—glad tidings—to the Jewish people, but not the gospel of Christ. He told them: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” They had been long looking for the God of heaven to set up a kingdom, though they did not understand what that kingdom would be; but it was glad tidings to them to thus learn that it was near. Christ preached the same glad tidings, and so did the apostles under their first commission. It is said of Jesus: “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,” (Mark 1: 14)—that is, he preached the glad tidings that the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, was at hand. The expression “at hand” was ex-

plained by Jesus. He sent out the seventy to preach, and said unto them: "And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke 10: 8, 9.) This shows that the kingdom of God was not set up in the days of John the Baptist, nor in the personal ministry of Christ, nor the first ministry of his apostles; it was only nigh unto them; and there was no change in this order of preaching between this statement and the death of Christ. They still preached the kingdom was at hand till the death of Christ, for there were some at the time of his death that were waiting for the kingdom of God. (See Luke 23: 50, 51.) Joseph of Arimathea was a good man, and was waiting for it when Jesus was crucified.

So the gospel of the kingdom was not the same gospel that Paul spoke of as the gospel of Christ at the beginning of this chapter. But we will continue the search. After Jesus had risen from the dead, and before he ascended to heaven, he gave another commission into the hands of his apostles that differed very widely from the first one. In the first he told them not to go among the Gentiles, but to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." So the preaching of John the Baptist, of Christ himself, and of his apostles during his public ministry, was not to the Gentiles, but to the Jews, among whom the kingdom of heaven was to be established, and then to be extended to the Gentiles.

After Christ had risen from the dead, he gave to his apostles another commission, which is recorded,

though in different language, by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These are not records of different commissions, but different records of the same commission. We examine first the record by Mark (16: 15, 16): "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." In this record the first thing to be done where they went was to preach the gospel—glad tidings. The passage quoted from Romans calls it "the gospel of Christ"—glad tidings concerning Christ. Paul plainly tells us what the gospel is as preached by him: "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast what I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15: 1-4.) This shows in great plainness what the gospel facts are, which are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Facts were never plainer than these; and surely they contain joyful tidings. Christ died for our sins, died to make it possible that our sins could be forgiven, and that we might be regarded as the Lord's people. All can see plainly from this what people are called upon to believe when called upon to believe the gospel. It shows how there is salvation in the gospel. The Corinthians had heard,

had believed, had received it, and were saved by it. So when Christ told the apostles to preach the gospel, it meant they were to preach these facts—were to preach Christ, and him crucified. They are plain, are easily understood, and had such overwhelming testimony as to their truth that there was no room for doubt that the facts had really been enacted, and that in believing these facts they truly believed the gospel. The matter of believing these plain facts is certainly a very plain, simple affair.

Two of the conditions upon which sinners can be saved are laid down in the record of the commission by Mark. These two conditions are belief of the gospel and baptism. While only these two are mentioned in this record, we are not to conclude, therefore, that they are all. By examining other records of it we shall find at least one more. We take Luke's record next: "And he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24: 46, 47.) This puts in another condition—repentance—and also the promise of remission of sins. He has the same preaching also that Mark has, only, instead of "preach the gospel," he mentions the facts that make up the gospel, which were to be preached to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. In these two records we have three conditions, all of which precede the promise of pardon—faith, repentance, and baptism. No man can take these two records and show by them that pardon was before or independent of any one of the others. Two of them

are distinctly placed before baptism. Mark puts it: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Luke has it that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached." So he puts remission of sins after, not before, repentance. These scriptures, therefore, have to be ignored to get salvation until these three conditions have been complied with on the part of him that would be saved. Matthew's record of this commission is different from both the others, but is in such form as to show that all these conditions come in before pardon. This is his record: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28: 19.) He puts it: "Make disciples of all the nations." To make disciples involves more than simply to teach, instruct. This is simply the first part of the work of making disciples. The other part is to induce them to become followers of Christ. None are disciples, except they become followers. Thousands learn of Christ, learn that he is the Son of God, and what he did to save sinners, and what they must do to be saved, but never do these things. These are not disciples and will be lost at last if they do no more. In becoming disciples, these three steps or conditions already noted must all be taken. Matthew mentions but one, and that is the last one next to the promise of remission of sins.

But every one that recognizes the authority of the commission knows that the last step—baptism—cannot be taken till the first two—faith and repentance—are taken. Mark puts faith as the first condition, Luke puts repentance before remission,

Matthew puts baptism as the step that puts people into Christ, and Paul shows that none are saved out of Christ. He says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5: 17.) In Christ, a new creature, pardoned; out of him, not new, not pardoned, not saved. No matter how much faith and repentance have to do in preparing one for baptism, if he stops short of baptism, he is not in Christ, according to this and various other passages. Out of Christ there is no salvation. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12.) "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1: 14.) The "whom" of this passage is Christ. So it is in him we have remission. Some claim they can go direct to God and find pardon without baptism. This is a mistake, for Paul says again regarding the matter of reconciliation: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Cor. 5: 19.) So they can only reach God through Christ—that is, by coming into Christ as the word directs. The man, therefore, that stops short of baptism will never reach the promise of pardon. There is, therefore, but one way to be saved by the gospel, and that is to obey the gospel. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5: 8, 9.)

To believe the gospel, to repent, and to be baptized are all of them things the sinner is commanded to do, while remission of sins is a promise. In doing what God has commanded, we obey the gospel. This done, the promise of remission is ours; but not till then. When we continue to obey God through life, eternal salvation is ours.

Salvation here and hereafter is through the gospel of Christ, and was first preached in fact on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem, and recorded in the second chapter of Acts. By careful examination of that chapter, we may learn what was preached and what was done and the order in which the conditions of pardon came in the sinner's obedience. On this very day the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak as the Spirit gave them utterance. In other words, the Spirit was speaking through them and in different languages. These facts, reported out through the city, soon brought a large crowd of people together to see and hear what was going on. Peter began talking to them, saw the great astonishment of some, and, hearing some of them say, "These men are full of new wine," he said: "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But," said he, "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." He further explained this wonderful outpouring of the Spirit, and then said to them specifically: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words."

This was really the Spirit of God calling the attention of the people to its words, thus: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

These facts are what Paul calls the gospel, as we have seen, and what the apostles were commanded to preach, beginning at Jerusalem. They were the very things Jesus said in the commission should be preached to all, and that all should believe who would be saved. Peter goes on, after presenting these grand facts, to show from David that he was to rise from the dead, and that the apostles were also witnesses of his resurrection. At the conclusion of this he said: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." This was a climax reached in the wonderful facts presented as to what had resulted to Jesus, whom they had crucified, and at the same time was an exceedingly strong demand for faith on their part in what he said regarding Jesus of Nazareth. It is the same as if he had said: "Believe these facts with all your hearts; be fully assured that all these things are true."

The facts were too plain and the evidence too strong for them to resist. They were pierced to

the heart, and in the deepest anxiety cried out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" This manifests a wonderful change in the minds of these people. They had only fifty days before given their voices for the death of Jesus. Now they firmly believe that he was truly the Son of God, was his anointed Son, was Lord also, and was made ruler at God's right hand. They now, in consequence of believing these facts, realize their terrible guilt in betraying and murdering the Son of God. So they asked: "What shall we do?"

The question was likely asked by these people in as deep earnestness as it was ever asked by any people on this earth. No people ever had greater reason to ask it from the very depth of their hearts than they. There was also need for an answer, backed by the full authority of heaven. And so it was; just that sort of an answer was at hand. The Holy Spirit, which had just that day come from heaven, sent by the Son of God himself, received also from the Father, thus combining the authority of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit itself, was present in Peter, to answer this momentous question. Can any one say an answer from such authority was not sufficient, or that there was any mistake in it? If so, who is the wonderful personage that is competent to show what the mistake is?

But we will give the answer. To fully appreciate it, however, let it be remembered that the persons to whom it was given were true, earnest believers in the gospel of Christ. To them it was said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of

sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The Revised Version has it "unto remission" instead of "for."

Now who is competent to criticise or improve upon this answer? The man that does it assumes to be greater and wiser than God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, all combined. The conditions of remission of past sins and the order of them are plainly and definitely fixed in this passage. As plainly expressed, they are faith, repentance, and baptism, and this is the exact order in which they come; and they show to every earnest, inquiring soul precisely where he can claim the promise of pardon. The same gospel, the same conditions of pardon and same order of conditions, and the same promise given then were to be proclaimed in all the world to every creature till time shall end. Hence the great reason why all should seek to understand the preaching, the law of pardon given then, and their order; for they are just the same to us as they were to them. No change has ever been made by divine authority; and woe be to the uninspired man that changes God's law or his order of things!

So this second chapter of Acts shows us plainly what Paul meant when he said of the gospel, "It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and shows us precisely how all can appropriate this power to themselves and be saved if they will. There never was a plainer lesson given for the consideration of a sinful world than this second chapter of Acts. So very plain was it as presented on that day that about three thousand souls, the first time they had heard it, promptly accepted it and were that very day baptized into Christ

and enjoyed the precious promise of the remission of their sins. Why should not all the world that want to be saved gladly embrace the same words, obey them, and thus allow the same gospel to become the power of God in their salvation now? Yet thousands claim to preach the gospel who neither preach the facts nor the conditions of the gospel as Peter by the Holy Spirit preached them on that day. They preach imaginary things, and urge sinners to accept and do things Peter said not one word about on that memorable day. Thus these uninspired men lead them away from what the Holy Spirit said on that occasion.

From the divine record as given above from the second chapter of Acts, no sinner, in order to believe the gospel, is required to believe any of the modern opinions of men—such as the prayer system of getting religion, abstract spiritual influence, or anything else about which there is nothing said in the oracles of God. People who believe these and such like things put their faith in what men say, not in what God says, for he does not say any of these things. Therefore, there is no more power in any of these things to save than there is in the uninspired men who utter them. But there is all power in God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the blood of Christ to save all that believe and obey the gospel as given in that chapter; and the assurance of it is the positive promise of the word of God.

CHAPTER V.

Faith: What is It, How Does It Come, and What Does It Do?

There is not a plainer subject in the Bible than faith, and yet perhaps not one more thoroughly misunderstood or more extensively misapplied. In fact, it is so extensively misapplied that the faith of the New Testament is eliminated from the exercise and practice of a large part of the religious world. They divide it up into two or three different kinds, which fill different places and accomplish different ends, as they suppose. They especially have what they call a "historical faith" and a faith which is the gift of God, which convicts and converts the soul, and which is with them, the faith that saves the soul. Believing that Christ was born in Bethlehem, that he was baptized by John in Jordan, that he went about doing good, and that he was crucified, buried, and raised again from the dead, as written in the first four books of the New Testament, is, with all those who believe in "getting religion," a mere historical faith, that, while it may lead to repentance, cannot lead to conversion and remission of sins. They talk much about a faith that is a direct gift of God, which converts the soul and works remission of sins. Yet there is not one word of any such divisions of faith in the word of God; and, besides, such a division breaks up and

destroys the faith of the Bible. No such faith as this second division represents is heard of or one time hinted at in all the Bible; and since it is not revealed in the oracles of God, it is simply and only an opinion, a mere matter of imagination, and hinders people from exercising the faith that the word of God does require.

The faith that we read about in the Bible is a faith that leads men to do what the word of God requires and to trust his promises for the blessing. It was just this sort of faith that led Abraham to leave his country and his kindred to go into the land of Canaan and to become a wanderer there for the balance of his life and made him one of the best men recorded in the oracles of God. It was a lack of this sort of faith that cast Adam and Eve out of the paradise that God gave them, thus shutting them out from the tree of life and dooming them to mortality, with all its woes. It was the exercise of this sort of faith that led Noah to build the ark that saved him and his family from destruction by the flood. It was not the mere act of believing the truth of what God said to him about the flood that he foretold; it was the exercise of his faith in the truth of God's word that led him to build the ark, and to build it just as God said to build it. Had he not done this, he would have perished in that flood just as did the rest of the antediluvian world. This is the sort of faith that influenced Lot to go out of Sodom when God had doomed it to destruction, and thus save his life, while a lack of it doomed his wife to be turned into a pillar of salt. It was just this sort of faith that saved the Jewish people from Egyptian bond-

age. They never would have thought or dreamed of doing what they did in coming out if God had not sent them a message of salvation by Moses and told them specifically what to do in order to be saved from bondage. They would have known it would be suicidal to attempt such a thing simply upon the dictates of their own wisdom; but when God sent them a message of deliverance by Moses, and demonstrated the truth of it through him, and opened the way for them, they obeyed God and came out. But it was a lack of faith to lead them to do just what God said do that doomed such a vast crowd of them to die in the wilderness after they had reached the very borders of the promised land. On the other hand, it was faith in the word of God that led Caleb and Joshua to do just what God said, that preserved them and led them into the land of milk and honey.

But what was the origin of the faith that led the Jews to leave Egypt and to cross the Red Sea? It was the word of God delivered by Moses and confirmed to their satisfaction by miraculous demonstration. If no message had been sent them telling them what the Lord had provided for them and what he required at their hands, and the evidences of the truth of the whole matter, they would no more have thought of such an undertaking than of attempting to make a new world; and had they made such an attempt without the hand of God in it, they would have failed as signally as if they had attempted to make a new world. Men know nothing of faith or what is to be believed, except as God reveals it to them by his word. The Jews could have known nothing of what God had in store

for them if he had not told them. But when he did tell them, it was their business to believe what he said about it, for he never asked them to believe a new message without confirmation of its truth by miracles; and when this much was done, they all had equal chances to obey what was required and equal chances to secure his promises. They all did this in crossing the sea, and all alike enjoyed freedom from their enemies, who were drowned behind them. When the spies returned from searching the land of Canaan, all had equal chances to go right in and possess the land; but only two out of the hundreds of thousands of the men of Israel so believed God as to do what he said do. These were Caleb and Joshua. The rest let their faith die just at the time they needed it most, and so wandered and died in the wilderness—died as strangers in a strange land; while Caleb and Joshua were under God's care all those years, and were safely led into the promised land.

All those people might have done as Caleb and Joshua did if they would. They had the same evidences of the power and greatness of God, had the assurance before them that God would do what he had promised to do. But when it came to trusting God's promises to take them into the promised land, they broke down. They were not willing any longer to walk by faith in God's word; so they failed by following their own wisdom and opinions. The faithful two still had faith enough to continue to do as God said, and kept up that faith till death. There never has been a time when any sort of faith would do men any good, except a faith that would lead them to do just as God directed. There is no

other sort of faith mentioned in the Bible through which to secure God's blessings. So the word of the Lord tells us that those Jews who failed to enter the promised land "entered not in because of unbelief." They were, therefore, purely responsible for the sad destiny that overtook them.

The faith that saves under Christianity is of precisely the same character, so that the examples of faith in the Old Testament throw a flood of light on the subject as we find it in the New Testament. Abraham's faith is especially used as an example for us now; and that is because he was faithful to do what he was commanded, and trained his family to do likewise.

One of the passages of the New Testament that is used to teach justification by faith only is one of the very strongest to show that the Savior meant a developed faith—that is, a faith perfected by obedience. It is this: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3: 14-16.) In this passage, so far as the phraseology is concerned, eternal life is twice promised on believing. But is it faith alone, simply the act of believing? If we construe it that way, we make it contradict other plain passages which plainly show that Christians who have fully obeyed the gospel and have come into the church not only may sin and be lost, but that there is actual danger of it. Paul says of God: "Who will render to every man accord-

ing to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." (Rom. 2: 6-9.) As surely, therefore, as that faithful Christians will reach eternal life, so surely will the unfaithful ones be lost. Since, therefore, it takes faithfulness to the end of life to reach the eternal home, it follows as a certainty that Jesus meant more than faith only when he promised eternal life to a believer. He meant those that would believe so strongly that they would follow him, be faithful to him in all his requirements until death. It takes just that sort of life to perfect faith so as to insure eternal life.

There is something else in that passage that makes it certain that Jesus meant more than faith only. Twice we have the expression, "that whosoever believeth in him." The word "eis" in the Greek is the word that is rendered "in," the same word also that is rendered "into" in every passage in which we are said to be baptized into Christ. So the expression "in him" should be "into him," which includes, at the very least, everything that is involved in conversion that puts a man where he has the promise of pardon. To reach this relationship, it takes not only faith, but repentance and baptism also; for without repentance no sinner can be pardoned, and without baptism no one is in Christ in the sense of pardon. Hence, in Acts 2: 38 it takes both repentance and baptism to put

believers into Christ. It says, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ [eis] for the remission of sins," which shows beyond a peradventure that believers cannot reach pardon till they repent and are baptized. Faith leads the sinner to repent, without which no sinner can be forgiven. It also leads to baptism, without which no one is "born of water and of the Spirit," and, therefore, not in the church, the kingdom of God, and not in Christ. Christ, therefore, meant much more than to simply believe that he is the Son of God. A man may believe that a lifetime, and die believing it, and be lost. Chief rulers among the Jews, many of them, believed this, and yet were not saved. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12:42, 43.) We know they believed, because the divine record says so; but their faith was dead and could not save. Faith is one step toward entering into Christ, and so important that the other two steps cannot and will not be taken without it. But when only that step is taken, it is dead and cannot save. "The devils also believe, and tremble," yet they are not saved, because they do nothing but believe; they have passed their day of grace, neglected their opportunities, and are already doomed. But living people, to whom the gospel is sent, can believe, repent, and be baptized; and when all these steps are taken, they are fully in Christ, "in whom we have redemption through

his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1: 14.)

These passages show what a perversion is made of the passage in the third chapter of John, and what a delusion is palmed off upon people when they are made to believe that Jesus meant faith only when he promised eternal life to him that believes. It is proper to say that the word "eis" does not always mean "into;" sometimes it means "at," "to," "toward," or "in," and is often so rendered. But following verbs of motion, or entrance, and where the idea of place is involved, connected with such words as "going," "coming," "carrying," "throwing," "sending," and the like, Greek lexicons render it by "into." The goal to be reached in conversion is the place where pardon, remission of sins, is to be found. That place is in Christ, in his body, the church, the kingdom of Christ and of God. In Christ is salvation, and in him only is salvation, remission of sins, to be enjoyed. Faith, repentance, and baptism are steps required to be taken to put the sinner into him. Hence, "eis," after the verbs "believe," "repent," and "be baptized," should be rendered "into," because the doing of these things is to lead people into Christ, where remission is promised.

No one has the right to attach any more importance to one of these steps than another. All must be taken; leave any one out, and entering into Christ is a failure. Take all of them, and the one so doing is in Christ and saved from his past sins beyond a peradventure. So, in Acts 2: 38, "into" is a far better rendering for "eis" than "for." "Unto," as the Revised Version has it, is also far

better than "for." These explanations on the passage quoted from John 3 afford a solution of every passage where salvation is promised to a believer. We have been thus particular on this passage to free it and all others of like import from the delusion of justification by faith only. Every case of conversion found in Acts of Apostles was upon the very same requirements and order as that of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, and also in perfect agreement with the conditions of salvation imposed in records of the divine commission.

We will now notice a few other cases to show just what sort of faith was always necessary to complete the matter of conversion. "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." (Acts 8: 5, 6.) This is just as the commission required. The preaching was to be done first—that is, the gospel, the glad tidings of salvation, was to be preached everywhere, in all the world. This is what Philip did at Samaria. He preached Christ as the Savior of sinners. To do this, he must preach him as the Son of God; preach him in his death, burial, and resurrection. The history of the case shows this was done by Philip. They must of necessity hear, understand, and believe the gospel in order to be saved by it. The people with one accord gave heed to what he preached. They understood the gospel, and, by the miracles which Philip performed in connection with the preaching, they were convinced of its truth. Simon the sor-

cerer had been for a long time bewitching them with sorceries, making them believe he had divine power; but when Philip came and preached and wrought miracles by the power of God before their eyes, they turned away from Simon and embraced the truth, as thus recorded: "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8: 12.) They heard the word, they saw the miracles, they believed. So their faith came by hearing the word of God, substantiated, as it was, by miracles which they could plainly see were by divine power. They not only believed, but they were baptized. This done, they were in Christ and had the promise of remission of sins. There is nothing said about repentance, but there are things said that make it certain they did repent. They believed and did what Philip preached. He preached the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ, and we know that repentance is among the things that concern his name; for Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." Also Luke, in recording the commission of Christ, said, in part, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his [Christ's] name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." In preaching the things concerning the name of Christ, Philip, therefore, had to preach repentance, which he most certainly did; and as repentance is before baptism, the Samaritans most assuredly repented before they were baptized. So they perfected their

faith by repentance and baptism, just as the three thousand did on the day of Pentecost.

Neither is there any other way by which a believer can so perfect his faith as to reach the promise of pardon. Taking these three steps prepares the alien sinner in every way for the reception of remission of sins. Through faith and repentance the heart and life are changed and made right; by baptism the state, or relationship, is changed. Thus the whole man is made new; the whole heart, the whole of the man—body, soul, and spirit—is brought into subjection to the will of God. He is purified through his humble obedience, and he is in Christ, where all the promises of God meet to bless the obedient. Hence, the only faith that can save the soul is the faith that is strong enough to lead one through all the acts of obedience that stand between the sinner and the promise of pardon.

In the same chapter we find Philip directed to the Ethiopian eunuch, to whom he preached the same gospel with the same results—a faith in the eunuch that led him to at once perfect his faith in the very same obedience the Samaritans did; and he went on his way rejoicing in the precious blessings of a new-born soul in Christ. Paul preached the gospel at Corinth, where he had much opposition. We have the following as the results: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." (Acts 18: 8.) This again shows the plainness and simplicity of the matter of conversion, of becoming Christians, when the Holy Spirit, through the apostles, did the preaching. The inventions of men

that have crept in since, and of which the religious world is full to-day, were not in the way then. The hearing of one sermon then was sufficient to direct sinners into Christ the same day or the same hour of the night.

It would be so now if all would lay aside the opinions, the doctrines, and the wisdom of men, and accept, preach, and practice the plain teaching of the Holy Spirit through inspired men, as recorded in the New Testament. The words of the Spirit preached then are still the words of God, and the same gospel preached then is just as much the power of God to save to-day as it was then. O, that men would be willing to trust God and his word, and would teach and practice it as written, and thus lead the people to trust the teaching of the Holy Spirit instead of the doctrines and commandments of men! The matter of faith as recorded in the word of God is so plain that all who go to the word of God for their light, instead of listening to what uninspired men say, will understand it. Faith is based on the word of God, and there is no other foundation for it. The only trouble is, so many people believe the doctrines and commandments of men instead of reading and believing the word of God, so that their faith is in the wisdom, the doctrines, and the inventions of men, and not in the word of God.

CHAPTER VI.

Repentance.

The subject of repentance needs much investigation and study in order to understand it. The first impressions many of us received in regard to repentance were that it consisted in much mourning and weeping. The denominations would have their protracted meetings, preach and exhort, and work upon the people till they would get them to come to the mourners' bench to be prayed for and to be further exhorted until it might please the Lord to speak peace to their souls. They were expected to continue this mourning, weeping, and lamenting for some days, or perhaps weeks, before the Lord would be ready to save them. Sometimes the same persons would be mourners at the protracted meetings for years, waiting for the Lord to get ready to manifest himself to them in his converting and saving power. If a sinner went forward to seek salvation, and in a short time, in perhaps an hour or two, he rose shouting that he was saved, that he had got religion, the good old brethren would shake their heads in doubt as to whether his religion was genuine or not, and especially so if he had been a pretty wild sort of fellow. In this way the impression was easily made that there was no genuine repentance unless this mourning and crying were

kept up for several days and nights; at least, they did not regard their repentance sufficient. This easily made the impression that, with the people who carried on these meetings, a pure article of repentance carried the sinner through a long siege of mourning, crying, and sad lamentation.

These things, however, have extensively changed these days, and there are plenty of grown-up people to-day that never witnessed one of these old-fashioned, mourner's-bench, get-religion meetings. The get-religion idea, however, has not changed very materially, only that it comes about in a very different way. But there is no better definition of repentance among that class of religious people than was then. The only way to get a true definition of repentance is to study the word and its general use in the Scriptures. To get at the meaning of the word in the most satisfactory way is to get the meaning of the Greek word that is rendered "repent" in our English versions. English lexicons give the meaning of words according to general usage among the people; and sometimes the original meaning and use of words have, by religious people, been perverted and so changed as to lose their original meaning. The word "repentance" has suffered much in the hands of some people in this way. It is especially well for all to study the use of words in the Scriptures, and try to determine the sense in which any word is used there when we want the scriptural meaning; and this is what every one ought to want. The verb "repent" is from the Greek word "metanoëo," which is found thirty-four times in the Greek Testament. The noun form of this word is "metanoia," and is found

twenty-four times in the Greek Testament. Thayer's Greek and English lexicon of the New Testament is everywhere regarded as a standard. This lexicon defines the verb "metanoeo," "to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend, with abhorrence of one's past sins." The word "metanoia" means much the same, except the little differences between defining a verb and a noun. To repent, therefore, involves a change of the mind, of the purpose or will, and to carry out this change by entering upon a new life, into a reformed state of life, and to practice upon the principles of truth and virtue. It culminates in a thoroughly reformed life to the full extent of his former wrong course of life.

It is difficult to find any one word that will express the full meaning of this Greek word in its fullest sense. Hence, other words are often used with it in expressing the full purport of that word. For instance, Jesus illustrates what repentance is by referring to the Ninevites: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here." (Matt. 12: 41.) He uses the word "repent" here in its broad sense, covering the entire meaning of that word, which is an entire change of mind, will, or purpose. They humbled themselves, they were sorry for their sins, abhorred them to the extent that they turned away from their sinful lives and into a better life. The record says regarding the matter: "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would

do unto them; and he did it not." (Jonah 3: 10.)

Paul says: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of." (2 Cor. 7: 10.) In this passage the word "repentance" does not include sorrow, for that is specified. It is, therefore, not in its fullest or broadest sense here. One of the main things involved in repentance is a reformation of the life of a man as to the matter of behavior, and the word here has that meaning in full force. The Corinthians did reform their lives in the matter of encouraging gross immorality in the church, and he commends them for it. A man had taken his father's wife, and they were allowing the matter to go on that way, till he wrote to them and stirred them up on it. They had then withdrawn from the man, and had thus shown themselves in a more favorable light; and that is what their repentance, their godly sorrow, had worked.

God, through Ezekiel, said to the Jews: "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." (Ezek. 18: 30.) Here seems to be a little tautology, the word "repent" and the word "turn" meaning nearly the same thing. The American Revised Version puts it: "Return ye, and turn yourselves," etc. We often find this sort of repetition in the Bible, likely to make things more emphatic. But the passage shows that the work to be done by the Jews was a thorough change in their whole lives, involving sorrow, abhorrence for sin, turning from sin and entering fully into the service of God, which was the only thing that could save them from ruin. All these passages show that

about the same things were done by the people in repenting, though more words are put in some passages to express it than in others.

The foundation of the whole matter is that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All, therefore, must repent, must turn out of sin into the service of God, or be lost. Repentance, therefore, is exceedingly prominent in this matter. When John the Baptist began the work of preaching to make ready a people for the Lord, one of the very first things he preached was repentance. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3: 1, 2.) The Jews at that time had all gone out of the way, had all sinned, and none of them were ready to receive the Son of God and become coworkers with him, and be ready to aid in building up the kingdom of heaven, which was to be the purest, most holy and upright body of people this world had ever seen. In order to be fitted for this, there must of necessity be a thorough reformation, a thorough change of purpose, of will, of the whole course of life that had been so long practiced by those people. The scribes, Pharisees, and elders of the Jews had all become corrupt. In the very first sermon of the Son of God, he said to his disciples: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5: 20.) They had turned away from the word of God, and were teaching and practicing instead the doctrines and commandments of men.

A tremendous change had to take place in the

hearts and lives of that sort of people before the Lord could accept and use them. Repentance had very much to do in bringing about this change; so John began in earnest this work of reformation. When many of the Pharisees came to his baptism, he said to them: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance." (Matt. 3: 7, 8.) This was going at the matter in a very radical sort of way. It was as much as to say: "You must manifest better lives, or you can have nothing to do with the kingdom of heaven." "Fruits" means the course, the actions of their renewed lives; and these were to be just such as were intended to result from genuine repentance. So the ministry of John was to bring about such a reformation in the lives of the Jewish people as should fit them to be the charter members of the church of God and to aid in the upbuilding and extension of that kingdom. John made many disciples, and so did Christ and his apostles, under the same teaching. But as to how many of these continued in this new life till the full establishment of the church, the kingdom of heaven, and were actually a part of it, none of us know. But that is just what the repentance, the thoroughly changed life that John preached in making ready a people prepared for the Lord, required. It required that all should continue this new life in order to be ready to enjoy and to be in this, the fully developed state of the kingdom of heaven. A repentance, a reformation of life, that does not continue amounts to nothing. It profited the Jews nothing to come out of Egypt and then fall back into sin

and rebellion against God, and die outside of the promised land. It was no benefit to become disciples of John or of Christ during his personal ministry, if they turned back into their old sins and continued in them. They were not ready for the kingdom when it came.

Not only was that principle true in the preparatory state of the kingdom, but it is equally true in the fully developed state of it. That is the very sort of repentance the apostles preached under the last commission. They were to preach "repentance and remission of sins" to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. This they did. Peter began it on the day of Pentecost, and it has never ceased to be preached to this day by all that preach the word as required. In this first sermon Peter said to believers that asked what to do: "Repent; change your whole mode, or manner, of thinking, feeling, and acting." The meaning of it is: "You are now required to turn from your former sinful lives and to enter upon a new life, upon altogether different principles." The change to be made in repentance involves the entrance upon a better life, obeying different requirements and laws, in order to make turning away from evil result in any good; for if the sinner stops when he ceases to do evil, and does no more than that, he will be lost. For a failure to go right on with the new life is itself a sin that will condemn, is itself disobedience. Hence, the new life is involved in the change that repentance demands.

God, through a prophet, expresses the idea of the change involved in repentance, thus: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings

from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isa. 1: 16, 17.) This was addressed to the Jewish people when they were so wicked they were doomed to destruction unless they would speedily change their lives. They had gone so far their prayers could not be heard, unless they would change. Hence the language: "Wash you, make you clean." This involves thorough repentance that would change their lives, would cause an entire end to their old lives and turn them into new lives—to cease to do evil and learn to do well.

It may be that the word "repent" does not always cover what is said in this passage, does not cover all that is embraced in the full idea of washing, making clean; but repentance is so important a factor in the matter of making a sinner clean that it cannot be done without repentance. This is especially true in the matter of conversion, as Peter used it on the day of Pentecost. He said: "Repent ye, and be baptized . . . unto the remission of your sins." No alien sinner can possibly be scripturally baptized without repentance, nor is repentance worth anything to one that refuses to be baptized.

Repentance, therefore, is so connected with the other acts of conversion that, without it, none of them can be of any avail to save the sinner. The same is true of all three of the acts of conversion—faith, repentance, and baptism. Leave any one of these out, and conversion is a failure. On the other hand, when salvation, remission of sins, is promised in connection with any one of these, the

others are necessarily implied. So, when salvation is promised on faith, repentance and baptism are both implied. Where only repentance is mentioned, with remission of sins indicated, the other two are implied. So of baptism. The three are so connected, so dovetailed into each other, that all have to be done, or no benefit results. They are like a chain of three links; drop out any one, and the chain is broken and useless. Repentance, therefore, needs to be studied in all these relations to fully understand it. These things show what delusion there was, and is, in the idea that repentance consists in long mourning or loud crying.

True, there must be a degree of sorrow in the heart on account of sin, or people would never turn from it. This, indeed, must amount to a sort of abhorrence of sin and its consequences in order to induce one to turn away from it. There are several things closely connected with sorrow that influence it more or less. There must be faith in the actual ruin and loss of soul that sin brings, and in the remedy the Lord has provided for sin; and there must be an appreciation of God's goodness in providing the remedy, for we are taught that the goodness of God leads to repentance. All these things are so closely connected with repentance that it cannot, and will not, be exercised to success without them.

No wonder, then, that repentance is such an important item in our salvation, and that it is sometimes represented as though that were all of it. In the passage in Paul's sermon at Athens, which says, "God now commands all men everywhere to repent," it seems to be implied that repentance is

the all in all of salvation; then turn to a passage in the third chapter of John, and you see that eternal life is staked on faith; then read the third chapter of 1 Peter, and you learn that baptism saves us. But the truth is, that all of them are so important that no sinner can be saved if he leaves out any one of them. This shows the importance of every item God has connected with our soul's salvation, and that they are so connected that we cannot leave any one out and be saved. Paul shows the connection and importance of all the different items in the plan of redemption in the following: "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." (1 Thess. 1: 9.) In this the whole matter of conversion and the Christian life were presented as if all were one and the same thing, so closely are they all thrown together. To turn to God from idols takes in the whole matter of conversion—takes in faith, repentance, and baptism—while to serve the living and true God covers the Christian life so long as we live; and, in fact, when we consider the matter of being saved in heaven, it is one grand system of service from the time we believe the gospel till we pass out of life.

Other difficulties also are frequently raised about repentance. Some put it before faith, basing it on such statements as that made by Mark, that Jesus, in his preaching, said: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1: 15.) But it is a fact that in this passage Mark was simply stating what he preached, without regarding the order in which the items came. He preached repentance and the gos-

pel, the good news that the kingdom of heaven was near. These things were both preached; but the scriptural order for faith and repentance, where they were given to alien sinners as they were to be obeyed, as in the second chapter of Acts, is that the gospel was first preached and the resurrection foreshadowed from the psalms of David; and as he closed this part of the gospel, Peter said: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2: 36.) The expression, "know assuredly," is just as strong a demand for faith as if he had said: "Believe with all your heart on Jesus as Lord." This believing was the first step for the sinner after hearing. They did believe, and, under the influence of that faith, they asked what they should do. The answer was, "Repent, and be baptized," thus showing that the order of these conditions of pardon was (1) faith, (2) repentance, and (3) baptism. Any other order for these conditions would be unscriptural, and would destroy the effect of them.

Another trouble that is sometimes raised on repentance is that God gives it, by which some understand and claim that God works it in the heart of the sinner, and for him, and that he has not the power to exercise it himself. Peter said of Christ: "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5: 31.) Then also it is said that repentance was granted to the Gentiles. (Acts 11: 18.) These passages simply give, grant, to sinners the privilege of re-

pening of their sins, that they may be saved. The matter of being saved by obeying the gospel is all a gracious privilege granted that all may obey it and thereby be saved.

If we put any other construction on these and other like passages, we make them contradict the many plain passages in which sinners are commanded to repent—that is, God gives the privilege of repentance and commands them to exercise it. This perfectly harmonizes all these passages, while the other construction makes them contradict each other. “God . . . commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” This passage cannot possibly be reconciled with the idea that God works, exercises, repentance in and for the sinner; but the idea that repentance unto life is a privilege granted the sinner, that he may exercise it and be saved, easily harmonizes with all the commands to the sinner to repent. By a proper study and understanding of the various passages in which repentance occurs, it becomes a very plain matter, and something that can be quickly exercised, so far as becoming a Christian is concerned. Three thousand heard, believed, repented, and were baptized, and thus became Christians the same day.

But Christians need to repent every time they sin, to the end of their lives. They must keep their souls pure through life, to be sure of heaven. Repentance, then, must be kept up through life.

CHAPTER VII.

Baptism: What Is It?

This is a much-disputed, perverted, and misrepresented subject, and needs much careful study to reach the whole truth upon it. There is not a prominent feature connected with that ordinance about which there are not differing and conflicting theories. The ordinance of baptism was never introduced till the days of John the Baptist. He was the first man that ever preached or practiced it by divine authority. We, therefore, need not look to the Old Testament for light on it; it is not mentioned at all in that book. Not one man was baptized in those days by God's command.

Hence, we have to look to the New Testament for light on that subject. Just one word is used to express that ordinance, the Greek word "baptidzo;" and since the New Testament was written in Greek, we have to appeal to the Greek to learn the meaning of that word. This Greek word is found about eighty times in one form and another in the Greek Testament. The noun "baptisma" is found twenty-two times, while the noun "baptismos" is found four times; and the word "baptistees," as expressive of the work John did, is found fourteen times. This word is no part of the proper name of John, but simply expresses his work. It means that John was a baptizer. It does not

mean that he was a Baptist, in the modern denominational sense of that word. Being the first man that ever baptized people by the authority of God on this earth, he was called "John the Baptizer." The definition of these words is plainly given in the Greek lexicons, and may be as plainly and as definitely learned as any words in the Greek language. Every standard Greek lexicon on earth defines "baptidzo" as meaning to immerse. Among all these there is not one that renders it by "sprinkle" or "pour."

The Greek language as spoken in the days of the New Testament was sufficiently full of words to express definitely and specifically any and every action ever ascribed to baptism. The word "rantidzo" means definitely and positively to sprinkle, and is used four times in the Greek Testament, but never one time used to express baptism. There is also a word in Greek that means to pour, the word "ekkeo;" and this word is found eighteen times in the Greek Testament, but never one time applied to this ordinance. Now is it not strange that neither one of these, though used in the New Testament, was ever applied to the ordinance of baptism, if, as so many claim, sprinkling and pouring are scriptural? While this ordinance is more than one hundred times expressed by "baptidzo," "baptisma," and the like, in not one single case is it ever expressed by the word "ekkeo" or "rantidzo." Is not this very significant? Surely, if the word "baptidzo" meant, or could possibly be made to mean, "sprinkle" or "pour," or both, these words would have been used a few times, at least, to express that ordinance. That would at least have

settled the fact that sprinkling and pouring are scriptural actions, or modes of baptism, as they are so often said to be to-day. But, instead of that, words that are universally admitted to mean immersion are more than a hundred times used to express that ordinance; while these other words that do specifically mean to sprinkle and pour are never, even one single time, used to express that ordinance.

These are certainly significant facts. Who can satisfactorily explain these facts so as to show that the New Testament actually teaches sprinkling and pouring as baptism? The man that can and will do that will certainly be put down as a hero. We have before us quotations from thirty-four Greek lexicons, collected by Brother J. W. Shepherd from some of the leading libraries of the world, every one of which puts "dip," "immerse," as the meaning of the word "baptidzo." Among these are the works of some of the most renowned lexicographers the world has ever produced; and, to a man, they say it means to immerse. It is a fact that ancient church historians testify that in the first centuries of the Christian era immersion was the universal practice among the churches, that the first case of affusion was not till about the middle of the third century. In that case it was done on account of severe illness on the part of the one desiring to be baptized, and the water was poured all over him. The practice of immersion, according to historians, was almost universal for over twelve centuries.

We have the following statement in Zell's Encyclopedia: "In the time of the apostles the form of baptism was very simple. The person to be bap-

tized was dipped in a river or vessel, with the words which Christ had ordered, and, to express more fully his change of character, generally adopted a new name. The Greek Church retained this custom; but the Western Church adopted, in the thirteenth century, the mode of baptism by sprinkling, which has been continued by the Protestants, the Baptists only excepted. The introduction of this mode of baptism was owing to the great inconvenience which arose from the immersion of the whole body in the northern climates of Europe." (Volume I., page 216.) According to this, the practice of the whole religious world was immersion for over twelve centuries. The Western Church here spoken of was the Roman Catholic Church, with headquarters at Rome; the Eastern Church was the Greek Church, with headquarters at Constantinople. So the Roman Catholics are the authors of sprinkling for baptism; while Protestant churches that have directly or indirectly come out from them have nearly all brought sprinkling with them, and are tenaciously clinging to it to this day. So it may be safely said that modern sprinkling was either inherited or borrowed from the Catholics. But the Greek Church, including the Greek-speaking world, who understand the Greek language better than any people on earth, have always practiced immersion, as they do to this day.

It is universally admitted that in the days of the apostles immersion was practiced everywhere; that the first instances of sprinkling or pouring were on account of severe illness, without a particle of claim that God ordained it—it was purely by the wisdom of men; that, later on, the difficulties of immersion

being considerable in cold climates, sprinkling was gradually introduced, until finally it was fully authorized by the Catholic Church, without one word of claim that God had ordained it. So it is a matter of undoubted truth, both from divine and human authority, that, during the apostolic age, immersion prevailed as God's authority and appointment. The very fact, therefore, that nothing else prevailed till after the apostles passed away, shows beyond a peradventure that sprinkling and pouring, which started many years after the last apostle died, are purely of human origin, since no inspired man ever left one word of record in their favor.

Is it not strange that such a large proportion of the religious world are accepting, practicing, and relying upon a human invention in the matter of baptism, and at the same time openly rejecting what God has ordained? In thus rejecting God's authority, they are not only setting God aside, but they are making void his commandments by the doctrines and commandments of men. Not only that, but they are deluding and deceiving the rising generation and all untaught people, and are leading them to trust in the wisdom of men instead of the power, wisdom, and authority of God, and of Christ, who died that a perishing world might live. In leading others into error, they are laying themselves liable to the doom passed by the Savior, saying: "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matt. 18: 6.) It is an awful thing to cause men to turn away from the word of God, and lead them into man's wisdom instead of it.

We have shown from the meaning of the word

that the baptism of the New Testament is immersion, and that sprinkling and pouring are purely and only human inventions. Now we wish to show from the history of baptisms recorded in the New Testament that all the incidents connected with them are precisely such as would only be necessary in cases of immersion.

The first cases of baptism that ever occurred on this earth are those performed by John the Baptist—more correctly, “John the Immerser,” which is as it stands in some versions. I have before me two versions that render it that way. That is precisely what the word means, and we put that down as a divine item, showing just exactly what John did in performing the ordinance of baptism. Suppose it had been “rantistees” instead of “baptistees;” then it would have been “John the Sprinkler,” and no scholar could have called it in question. In that case we would have divine authority for sprinkling instead of immersion, as we now have it; and if that was actually what he did, is it not strange that the Lord did not put it that way? Yet he did not; but he put a word that makes his own word say that John was an immerser. This unmistakably shows that John was not a sprinkler. If there was nothing else said of John’s baptism, this one word would forever settle the question that immersion was what he did. But this is not all. “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.” (Matt. 3: 5, 6.) Here we have it that he baptized, immersed, the people in Jordan, which is a river of water. Mark puts it: “In the river of Jordan.”

This harmonizes fully with immersion; for in performing it the candidate is taken into the water, and while in the water he is immersed in the water. This gives a natural, necessary item in the matter of immersion; but in sprinkling or pouring, such procedure would be not only unnecessary, but awkward, bunglesome, and inexpedient. In sprinkling, it would be useless and unnecessary to go to a river at all. A pitcher of water would be sufficient to sprinkle a whole meetinghouse full of people, and no earthly need of going to a river. But to immerse a man you have to go to a river, or provide a vessel or pool of sufficient size to put the candidate in the water so that his whole body would be under water. This is why it was so convenient for John to do his preaching near the river, where there was plenty of water. But none of these things would be necessary to sprinkling.

These items and circumstances make it so natural and easy for John to say, as in the Revised Version: "I baptize you in water"—that is, "I immerse you in water." This is practical, and what he really said he would do. But suppose he had said, "I sprinkle you in water." Then he would have expressed an impractical and difficult thing; for the expression requires him to handle the person, not the water. How could he get the person in shape to sprinkle in drops in water? But as John said it, "I immerse you in water," it is perfectly easy, and exactly what he said he was doing. It is so nice and fitting to take hold of the person and lay him gently down in the water and raise him up out of it. This, therefore, is another

circumstance that plainly and unmistakably indicates immersion.

Another case in the history of the baptisms of the New Testament is the following: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. . . . And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water." (Matt. 3: 13-16.) So Jesus went to Jordan to be baptized; and as soon as it was done, he came up out of the water. That shows that, in order to be baptized, he went to the river, went down into the water, was baptized—immersed—in the water, and came up out of it. All of these things would be unnecessary and meaningless if only a little water was sprinkled on him, but in immersion all these things are absolutely necessary. The very manner in which these items are recorded prove beyond peradventure that Jesus was immersed; for he perfectly did his Father's will in all things, and one item of that was that he should be baptized. To be baptized is to be immersed. So in this Jesus has given us an example, that we should follow his steps. Every one that loves Jesus loves to contemplate what he did. We love to contemplate his trip from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized; we love to consider the scene of his burial in a watery grave, and rising therefrom to hear the Father confess him as his Son, and to be the recipient of the Holy Spirit, and to enter upon the wonderful work he had come to accomplish. It ought to be a matter of the greatest joy to follow his example in this Heaven-ordained appointment of baptism.

It brings much consolation to the writer of this to know that, more than fifty-eight years ago, he

did as his Lord and Master requires in this matter; that he went to the river, then went down into the water, and was buried with him by baptism into death, and was raised up with him to enter upon a new life. There is something lovely in following the beautiful example of our dear Savior. Whether we go to a river or a pool, we follow his example in this divine ordinance.

But, again, John baptized "in Enon near to Salim, because there was much water there." It does not say, as some attempt to explain, that he was there because there was plenty of water to drink, but that he was baptizing there because there was much water. Immersion demands much water; sprinkling does not. There would be no meaning in the allusion to "much water" if only sprinkling was done there. Thus the whole history of John's baptism, so far as given, shows unmistakably that he immersed the people—just what the word itself literally means.

Next in the history of the performance of baptism, we notice the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. The record runs thus: "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on

his way rejoicing." (Acts 8: 36-39.) In the Revised Version verse 37 is left out; but that has nothing to do with the act that was performed in the baptism. The history is, they came unto a certain water; then they went down into the water; and while in the water, Philip baptized him. Why all this going down into, and coming up out of, the water, if only a few drops were sprinkled on him? There could be no meaning in it if that were all that was done. But understand the word "baptize" to mean "immerse," and then it is at once plain; for all these were necessary to enable Philip to perform that act. So in the history of every case of baptism in the New Testament.

Now we will examine some figurative allusions to baptism. We have one of these in the Gospel recorded by John: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3: 5.) Almost all, or quite all, the commentaries we have ever seen, also the creeds, confessions of faith, religious writers, and prominent preachers we have ever heard of, admit that "born of water" refers to water baptism. That being true, then to be "born of water" requires immersion; for nothing short of immersion could represent, in any sense, a birth. Every man, therefore, that admits that this passage refers to water baptism admits that baptism, as to its action, is immersion. Any other view of it destroys the meaning of the Savior's language; for as certainly as it refers to water baptism, so certainly does it mean immersion, and that is the point we wish to establish in the present use of it. We need not make

any argument on the claim that the word "water" in this passage means literal water. The word so rendered is found seventy-nine times in the Greek Testament, and in every instance is rendered "water;" and it is a known fact that water baptism is the only use made of water in the new covenant. So the word "water" is literal here. These considerations forever settle the claim that this passage perfectly harmonizes with immersion as the meaning of the Greek verb "baptidzo," and establishes it as the meaning attached to that word by the Savior.

We now proceed to show that Paul, the great apostle to the Gentiles, understood it the same way. To the Romans he said: "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6: 4.) No man can venture to say that Paul did not understand what baptism is, as abundantly inspired as he was, and he abundantly sustains immersion by putting baptism as a burial and resurrection. To the Colossians he also said: "Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." (Col. 2: 12.) It would be folly to make any special argument on the meaning of these two passages, since they so plainly express the very thing we are contending for—that baptism is immersion, which puts people under the water and raises them out again. But sprinkling, as every one knows, cannot possibly represent either burial or resurrection. There is no respect in which a few

drops of water sprinkled on the head can represent these significant actions; but almost the whole religious world recognizes immersion as baptism, and that it was practiced by John and the apostles, and that forever cuts off everything that differs from it. If John, Christ, and the apostles practiced immersion, there has been no power on earth since that had any right to change it.

What John, Christ, and the apostles practiced is absolutely safe and right, while nothing else is. Why people should turn away from that which everybody says is right, and accept that which has no divine warrant, is passing strange. There is not a Greek scholar on earth that will claim that "baptidzo" means to sprinkle. No Greek scholar will translate the word "baptidzo" by "sprinkle" in any passage in the New Testament. There is absolutely no authority to so render that word. Yet there are millions practicing it, and relying upon sprinkling as though that were the very thing God ordained, although there is nothing but human authority for it. Salvation is too sacred a thing to trust to human wisdom. A mere matter of convenience should cut no figure when the salvation of the soul is at stake, nor should one single human invention take the place of the word of God.

The Lord's word is so plain that all who will can understand it. But the will is the trouble. People prefer something else, and do that which they prefer. If all were willing to take God at his word, do what he says, and trust his promise for the blessing, the religious world might soon be one, and divisions and animosities be forever buried.

In reality, all religious people do admit that im-

mersion is baptism, but say it is not the only baptism. This was the position of N. L. Rice, in the debate with A. Campbell, at Lexington, Ky., in November, 1843. In fact, almost all scholars of all pedobaptist denominations have all the time admitted immersion to be valid baptism. This much admitted virtually denies sprinkling, since the word "baptize" expresses one specific act; and to admit that one act to be immersion is to deny that sprinkling is in it. No one word of specific action can express both immersion and sprinkling; for both these are specific acts, and are so radically different that "baptidzo," which means specifically to immerse, cannot possibly express sprinkling. Catholics, the authors of sprinkling, do not claim that sprinkling is taught in the New Testament; they simply claim the Catholic Church authorized sprinkling. There is, therefore, not one word of authority for sprinkling instead of immersion; and no church on earth has the right to change, add to, or take from the word of God. If they do, it is at the peril of their souls, as specified in the last chapter of Revelation. The matter of sprinkling and pouring as baptism is purely of human origin, and stands only upon human authority—and papal authority, at that. Christ used a word to express that ordinance that is universally admitted to mean "immerse" by scholars. It is impossible, therefore, for it to mean "sprinkle." Every one, therefore, that accepts sprinkling is building upon the sand, and is taking things into his own hands instead of submitting himself to Christ in all things.

CHAPTER VIII.

Why Should People Be Baptized?

Very few items among all the conditions of salvation have been answered in ways more contradictory than the above. Why it is so, would be hard to explain. The plan of salvation has been provided for man through our Lord Jesus Christ, and has been offered to men upon certain conditions. Some of these conditions belong especially to alien sinners, to bring them out of sin and into the kingdom of Christ, the church of God; while others, and just as important ones, belong to the child of God, to perfect him in the Christian life, and thus prepare him for heaven. Men in their sins are not ready for heaven, and could not be happy in heaven if there. It requires preparation for sinful, worldly-minded people, to make them ready for the society and enjoyments of the home of the soul. In the first place, the alien sinner needs a decided preparation for the high and holy relationships of the church on earth; then he needs much and continued training in the church to prepare him for the still purer home in glory. The alien sinner must go through a change, or preparation, of heart; of life, or behavior; and of state, or relationship. These changes are accomplished through obedience to the first principles of the gospel—faith, repentance, and baptism.

We have considered the first two of these—faith

and repentance. Now we are considering baptism, and the part it is to perform in completing a union with God and Christ. In other words, what is baptism intended to accomplish in the matter of salvation? Many tell us that it has nothing at all to do with salvation, that it is a nonessential, that people can be saved as well without it as with it, and such like. This is a question that can never be settled by the opinions of men, nor by the doctrines or commandments of men. If ever settled at all, it must be settled by the word of God. It is worth nothing to settle any religious question by what men say. The word of the Lord, just as he gave it, and that alone, can settle things.

So, in the first place, we ask: Whence came baptism, who established it, and by what authority was it given? Jesus demanded of the chief priests and elders: "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell." (Matt. 21: 25-27.) When they came to think over the matter, they found they were between two difficulties, and decided they would take neither horn of the dilemma, so they pleaded ignorance. They were satisfied, if they said John's baptism was from heaven, Jesus would say: "In admitting that, you admit that John was all right; and he testified of me; why do ye not believe him then?" They did not intend to admit that Jesus was the Son of God, and did not want to be put to the test. They acted sharply, but

were very wicked in closing their eyes and ears against the truth.

There seems to be no certainty in the minds of the people to-day as to the origin of baptism. In fact, when men say that it is a nonessential, they either say it is from men or that God himself has established a meaningless and foolish institution. It would really be charging God with folly to admit that he ordained baptism and then call it a "nonessential." What good could come either to God or to men from a nonessential? In fact, it is worse than folly if a nonessential. It causes a world full of division, strife, and contention, and, after all, is of no value whatever in the matter of salvation. It is like a fifth wheel to a wagon; there is no place for it, no use for it, nothing it can do, and yet everlastingly in the way, and causing trouble, bitterness, and unending annoyance. There is nothing else connected with the whole gospel plan of salvation that is causing greater disturbance; and yet no good to result from it to any one, since, if nonessential, there is no good in it. Why cumbereth it the ground if there be no good in it, and yet so much apparent evil?

But there must be some mistake about its being a nonessential. In order to settle this question, its origin must be settled. It originated with the New Testament. Not a word was said about it in the Old Testament. It originated with John. Did he invent it by his own wisdom, or did God have a hand in it? If it was invented by John, then, sure enough, it is of no value. If it was ordained of God, then it is next to blasphemy to say of it: "There is nothing in it." Could God have made

such a mistake as to ordain a thing that could do no possible good, and yet produce so much evil? People surely do not realize the extent of their folly in laying such things to the charge of a merciful and all-wise God; for there is no mistake in the claim that he ordained it. It is said: "The word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for [into] the remission of sins." (Luke 3: 2, 3.) The word that John preached, therefore, was the word of God. The word that came from God was his word. The word of man comes only from men. Besides, John "was a man sent from God." (John 1: 6.) Would God call a man and send him to prepare the way for his own Son, give him a message to proclaim, and say of that message that it is "for [into] the remission of sins," and yet the very message he gives him to proclaim be of no value to man? People had better think a little before they place the word "nonessential" with it, for that cannot be said of anything that helps to put people "into the remission of sins." It were better for a man that his tongue should cleave to the roof of his mouth than that he should so speak of an ordinance of God. So important was this ordinance that it was said of those who rejected it, that they "rejected the counsel of God against themselves" in so doing. (Luke 7: 30.)

It is also said of John that not a greater prophet was born of woman than he; and, besides, he was filled with the Spirit of God from his birth. Baptism, therefore, was part of the message John was sent to proclaim. It was the word of God pro-

claimed by the Holy Spirit through one of the greatest prophets that had ever risen. It is terribly dangerous to any man to call that word a "nonessential."

But, in the next place, what was the origin of the baptism with which we have to do now, the baptism of the fully developed state of the kingdom of Christ? Jesus himself authorized this after he had been crucified, buried, and raised again from the dead; and, besides, he prefaced the words that authorized this baptism with these words: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28: 18, 19.)

When all authority in heaven and on earth are involved in an ordinance, what more can be said? Who and where is the man that is able to set all this authority aside, and say of what this authority has appointed that it is naught—a nonessential? It is an awful thing for men to presume to do such a thing. It had been better for such that they had never been born.

When the above commission was given to the apostles, it was not only a positive command to the apostles to baptize the people, but it also involved a positive command to the people to be baptized. This is plainly shown by the apostles in executing this command as given to them. Peter, on the very first occasion of executing this divine commission, commanded the three thousand to be baptized. There is not a more positive command in the New Testament. He also commanded the house of Cor-

nelius to be baptized. Thus, on the occasions of the first preaching of the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles, the Holy Spirit positively commanded the people to be baptized. The great commission of the Son of God had a twofold bearing. Directly, the command was to the apostles to disciple the nations, baptizing them; but, indirectly, it required that they command the people to be baptized, in order that they might carry out the command, which was binding on them, to do the baptizing. They could not do this till the people were ready to be baptized. These things show that this ordinance was full of divine authority in every way you may view it. God through Christ ordained it by all the authority of heaven, and upon precisely the same authority required all that would be saved to submit to it.

How strange that any one that believes the Bible to be an inspired book should ever even insinuate that this ordinance is of no value in man's salvation! There is precisely the same authority for people to be baptized that there is for them to believe and repent. If either faith or repentance be refused, ruin is inevitable. If baptism be refused, the one that does it will die out of God, out of Christ and the Holy Spirit, and without the promise of remission of sins. All, therefore, that reject this ordinance reject Christ, reject God, reject the Holy Spirit, and are without hope and without God in the world. Christ is nowhere said to have become the author of salvation to those that reject, refuse to obey, him. All that reject baptism, reject—disobey—Christ in so doing, and they cut themselves off from the promise of salvation through him—cut

themselves off from the blood of Christ and all of its benefits by refusing to come into Christ, in whom they have the promise of remission through his blood. The Jewish people had to go where God recorded his name to make their offerings in order to be accepted of him. So people have to come into the name of Christ in order to be saved; for God is "in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

Obedience, therefore, to God and to Christ is, or should be, the leading motive, or purpose, people should have in being baptized. Obedience to his Father was the motive that led Christ to be baptized. When he came to John to be baptized of him, John would have excused himself, saying: "I have need to be baptized of thee." "And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." (Matt. 3: 15.)

But some may say: What means so much obedience? Is God a tyrant, that he has to be so implicitly obeyed. Nay, verily! Just the reverse. God is full of love and mercy, and it is by his grace we will be saved, if saved at all. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." They cannot be saved in their sins. They will have to come out from their sins, cease to sin, and become holy, in order to reach heaven. The commands of God require certain acts of obedience, which bring men out of sin, out of sinful lives, and into harmony with God; to cause them to love God, to love Christ, to love the truth, which makes them holy, and to perfect the righteousness of God in them. Without holiness, Paul says, no man shall see the Lord. These strong and positive commands of God, there-

fore, are intended for man's good, not simply to have him do things because God has the authority to command and to be obeyed. See what the commands and promises of God did for Abraham—how they took him from idolatry and made him one of the best men the world ever saw. It was his faith and obedience that made him thus pure and holy and good. Obedience to the gospel of Christ makes people pure and good to-day. Christ "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Tit. 2: 14.) In all our obedience to the gospel, there is no one act that subjugates the whole being of man more thoroughly to the will of God than baptism. In that we walk wholly by faith, not by sight, in submitting the whole soul and body to him that commanded it. This sort of submission to the will of God, having already submitted in the matters of faith and repentance, completes our preparation for pardon, takes us out of the kingdom of Satan and puts us into Christ, placing us where we can trust the promise which says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Peter also, writing to those who had become Christians, says: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (1 Pet. 1: 22.) So, instead of obedience to the gospel being tyrannical, it is the very thing, and the only thing, that can purify us and fit us for pardon. This is why none can be saved who obey not the gospel, and why such shall be eternally lost. (See 2 Thess.

1: 8, 9.) It is God's grace that saves, but it does it through obedience to the gospel of his grace. This is the explanation of the command: "Repent, and be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus Christ for [into] the remission of sins." In this the command and the promise are closely connected together. Those people, being already believers, are commanded also to "repent, and be baptized." These acts are the end of the command to the people. This obedience was to put them into remission of sins by putting them into Christ, in whom is remission.

Many handle this passage so as to make it appear that the expression, "for the remission of sins," is part of the command to the sinner—something he is to obey. Remission of sins never was a command. It is something no sinner can obey. He cannot forgive his own sins, but he can obey the commands that place him where God promises to pardon. There never was a greater mistake made than to turn this precious promise of remission of sins out of the hands of God and put it into the hands of the sinner. It entirely disarranges salvation by grace, and makes it something the sinner can do for himself. O, that people would allow God's divine arrangements to stand as he has placed them!

But this rich and cheering promise of remission of sins is by no means all that is promised to those that obey the gospel. The blessings of being in Christ are many and precious. This divine relationship, with all its attendant blessings, is secured through a humble obedience to the gospel of Christ. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new crea-

ture; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"—new life, new purposes, new aspirations, new hopes, new enjoyments, new associations; permitted also to sit together in heavenly places in Christ. In him, we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Those who come into Christ enjoy the blessings of dying in him, sleeping in him after death, and of rising from the dead among the first at the last day. Indeed, the blessings to be enjoyed by those who come into Christ and live in him are more than we can undertake to mention. So, while we enjoy in all its richness the promise of remission of sins on coming into Christ, let us by no means overlook or fail to enjoy the almost innumerable other blessings we reach through the same obedience that brings us to the promise of remission of sins. Let no one blessing overshadow or in any wise lessen the value and importance of others.

These things show very forcibly some of the blessings that are ours when we enter into Christ. In a word, when we obey the gospel, one step of which is baptism, we are where all spiritual blessings are promised us, being in him. Any man properly taught in the gospel plan of salvation will understand just when he can claim the promise of pardon. But people may be wrongly taught as to when the Lord will pardon, and think they have it before baptism; yet they may be so impressed that they are commanded of God to be baptized that they may do it purely to do God's will. In that case the Lord will not fail to fulfill his promise to an obedient servant. God fulfilled all his promises to Abraham, some of which he did not understand

for years after they were made, and died without understanding some of them; but he understood what God commanded him to do, and did it faithfully, and was abundantly blessed. As Christians, we are enjoying blessings in Christ to-day that were promised to Abraham, which he never understood; yet he obeyed God's commands to him, and was blessed through life in his obedience as few men have ever been blessed. The highest duty of man is to do what God says do, and because God says it, and in full faith trust his promises, whether he fully understands when and how they will all be fulfilled or not.

There was never purer obedience rendered to God on this earth than when Jesus was baptized because he knew it was his Father's will. Hence, obedience, submission to the will of God, is the purpose we should have in doing all that God has required of us. If we will, he will never forget to bestow any blessing he has promised. Obedience to God, therefore, should be our chief purpose when God commands. Baptism was one of the items embraced when Jesus said: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." So, whether we contemplate baptism for, in order to, unto, or into the remission of sins, let all be sure to remember that it is the command of God, and that all the authority of heaven rests upon it; also, that it is inseparably connected with faith and repentance, which precede it, and that salvation, remission of sins, is a promise that follows it. In fact, all these—faith, repentance, baptism, and remission of sins—are so con-

nected that the last mentioned cannot be reached unless the other three precede it.

We want to repeat and emphasize a few points we have made in this chapter. First, people should be baptized because God commands them to do so, with all the authority in heaven and on earth to back it. Secondly, people should be baptized because it takes obedience to the gospel, of which baptism is a part, to purify the soul and fit people for pardon, and make it just for God to justify, to forgive and save them. In the third place, people ought to be baptized because it, preceded by faith and repentance, also parts of the obedience of the gospel, puts them into Christ, in whom not only remission of sins is found, but all the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant. It is also the step that puts us across the line that separates the church from the world; for no alien sinner is recognized as across that line till baptized into Christ. But when all these steps have been taken, there can be no doubt as to our standing. We are then children and heirs of God; not only heirs of God, but joint heirs with Christ. We then have the right to cultivate the hope of immortality and eternal life, and can rejoice with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, and may have as associates the purest and holiest of earth, and enjoy all the promises of God to his children here and hereafter, if we will continue to walk by faith.

CHAPTER IX.

Evidence of Pardon and of Continued Acceptance With God.

There is an immense amount of confusion and misunderstanding among the masses of the people on this subject. The very first principles of it are misunderstood and misapplied. A great many are told: "The moment you accept Christ as your personal Savior, that moment you are saved." This sort of testimony is all human, with nothing divine in it. The Lord nowhere makes that statement as the ground of acceptance with him. This is simply a proposition made by uninspired men, and is thoroughly human and uncertain in its whole character. The preachers who tell sinners that, utterly fail to tell them how they must accept Christ. They must tell them what Christ requires them to do in order to be saved—must tell it plainly, so the people can understand it, so they will know just when they get to the promise—in order to make that expression mean anything to the sinner. This they do not do. They leave it as if it were to be altogether a mental act—that they must make up their minds to accept him as their Savior, and that moment they are saved. These preachers then carry out the matter on that line with them. They ask those that have accepted Christ to stand up to indicate it; and when they stand up, they announce them converted and saved.

There is nothing manifested in all this but human wisdom. There is no passage in the word of God that makes any such proposition to the sinner. It is simply and only human. There is, therefore, no obedience in it, except what little faith they have in Christ. People, therefore, that trust in that proposition place their faith in man, in promises made by uninspired men; for there is nothing in it that is from God. It leaves the promises and authority of God entirely out. It is simply and only from men. There is only one point in it that is in any sense like the teaching of the New Testament; that is, the idea of a willingness to accept Christ as their Savior. This willingness to accept Christ must be reached; but the question must still be answered as to what it is to accept Christ, so the sinner can know when he has so far accepted him as to entitle him to the promise of pardon.

The evidence of pardon is no one-sided matter. First, we must know the conditions upon which God promised it; in the next place, we must be assured in our own minds that we have complied with the specified conditions, so as to know that we have reached the promises. If we do a thousand things that men say, and do not do the things which God says do, we still have no promise from God that we are pardoned; and since men are unable to save sinners, those who accept and do only what men say have no promise from God that they are saved. God has very specifically revealed what sinners must do in order to be saved; and if men were willing to accept the Lord's way of salvation, they could as easily tell what the Lord says for them to do as they can tell what men say. The great trou-

ble is in the fact that so few are satisfied with what the Lord requires them to do. They all want to be saved, but want it in some other way.

God has never proposed to recognize anything as obedience to him, except the doing of what he has commanded. Those, therefore, who are seeking and expecting it in some other way, simply have no evidence of acceptance with God. Not one of God's promises can be appropriated, unless we comply with the conditions upon which he made the promise. We are dependent upon the word of God for the truth of everything we believe regarding him. We believe God exists because the Bible so abundantly reveals him, and gives such indubitable testimony that he is, and of the wonders he has performed. We believe that Christ was born in Bethlehem because the word of God says so. Upon the same principle we believe he died and rose again from the dead and ascended to heaven. It is by the word of God we believe that the church of God exists on earth. We would know nothing of salvation and of heaven if the Bible had said nothing about them; and we know absolutely nothing about these beyond what the Bible says about them. We would not know that Enoch and Elijah were translated if the Bible did not say so.

Since, then, we are dependent upon the word of God for all that we know about salvation, how can we be assured that we are saved, except by the word of God? What assurance had Abraham that he should find a country, and that in him—that is, in his seed—all nations of the earth should be blessed, except that God promised it? It was not a matter of feelings or emotion that he looked for

these things, but purely by believing the promise of God. So we to-day can have no assurance of remission of sins, except as the word of God tells us so; and as we have no access to the word of God but in the Bible, we must have a Bible promise for the remission of sins, or we have no promise at all.

What sort of evidence had the Jew of remission of his sins when he had made a sin offering under the law of Moses? None at all, unless he made the offering as the word of the Lord directed. In the first place, God told what to offer and how to offer it; and when the last step was taken in making the offering, the promise was in these words: "And it shall be forgiven him." So the promise was dependent upon complying with the conditions. If he did this, the promise was as sure as God's throne. If the conditions were not complied with, then there was no promise at all. The Jew could not tell by his feelings that he was pardoned; but he could understand the law of sin offerings, and could understand when he had made the offering as the word of God directed. At that point he could understand the promise of pardon was his.

Feelings could not have been any evidence of pardon to those Jews, because God was the pardoning power in that case, and pardon took place in him, and not in the mind, in the heart, of the one pardoned. It was perfectly natural for one who had sinned to feel joyful relief as soon as he reached the point in his obedience where he could claim the promise of pardon. But this joy, this relief of mind, was not the evidence of his pardon; it was only the result of believing that he was pardoned, which belief was founded upon the word of God, which

expressed the promise of forgiveness. Feelings, good or bad, are only the result of something believed or done, and are no evidence of the truth or reality of the thing that caused the rejoicing or the sadness.

During the Civil War reports frequently went out that a certain man was dead. Then his friends mourned his death. After a while they would find that he was only badly wounded and was rapidly recovering. Then they were happy again. In neither case were the feelings any evidence of the truth of what they had heard. It only shows they each time believed the report, and that their feelings were in accord with their faith and the character of things believed. So feelings are not the evidence of pardon. In order for feelings to be an evidence of pardon, we would have to find certain feelings described in the word of God, and then find it stated that when people experience those feelings they are pardoned; but the trouble is, there are no such things in the Bible, and, therefore, it is not possible that feelings can be the evidence of pardon. But everybody has the right to be happy when they have the word of God for it that they have been forgiven. The evidence of pardon is no one-sided thing. There are really two witnesses in the matter of forgiveness of sins. The word of God is one witness, testifying that upon compliance with certain conditions people may be pardoned. The spirit of the man, which knows when he has done the things required in full purpose of heart, is the other witness. Then, if he assuredly believes the word of God, he believes that he is pardoned, and rejoices in the Lord.

This is always true in the matter of remission of sins. There is always law on the one hand and obedience on the other. Paul expresses this principle in Christianity when he says: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom. 8: 2.) The whole matter of Christianity comes to us through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. It teaches us all about Christ, and what he has done for us, and what we must do in obedience to him in order to be saved. The Holy Spirit gives a law, by submission to which pardon comes to all that obey that law.

In the same chapter he also says: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This presents the matter in very plain and forcible language, so that any one that has any sort of competency can understand it. The proposition to be established is that we are children of God. In establishing this truth, there are two witnesses that testify—the Spirit of God and our spirits. The Spirit of God testifies in words that all can understand. In the first place, it tells us that Christ died for our sins, and that he rose again for our justification. It tells us that his "blood was shed for many for the remission of sins." It tells us that the love of God was so involved in the matter of human redemption "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." These things are enough to interest any soul that feels the need of salvation, and lead him to investigate the matter. The death of Christ and the shedding of his blood lie at the foundation of

the whole matter of remission of sins. If Christ did not die and rise again, there is no remission of sins.

So the question is now appropriate: What is the evidence that Jesus is the Christ—that he died and rose again? To this there is but one answer—the word of God, through the Holy Spirit, tells us so; and when it can be truthfully stated that the word of God tells us so, that is an end to all controversy with all that believe the Bible. These grand facts being true, then salvation, remission of sins, is possible. How, then, does the Spirit tell sinners they can secure remission of sins? It says: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3: 18.)

When the word of God plainly tells us in so many ways and in so many places that Jesus is the Son of God, and demands that we believe it, and pronounces condemnation upon us if we do not believe, it is plainly impossible to have any evidence of pardon if we do not believe. But the above and many other passages being true, it is certain the believer is on the way to secure assurance of the remission of his sins; and if salvation were by faith only, we might rest the case, so soon as we are assured that we believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that he died to save a ruined world.

But the Holy Spirit does not stop the matter here. It is meant that the faith that saves is a working faith that leads its possessor to do other things also, equally necessary with faith, in order to salvation. Repentance comes next after faith as presented by

the Holy Spirit. Jesus himself twice said to the Jewish people, "But, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13: 3, 5), which at once shows the impossibility for sinners to be saved without repentance; and twice, when the Holy Spirit was preaching through Peter to convert sinners, they were positively commanded to repent (Acts 2: 38; 3: 19). These settle the question that no sinner can have the testimony of the Holy Spirit that he is saved unless he repents. But this is not all. Jesus, in the commission, said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16: 16.) Only those that believe and are baptized have any promise of salvation. The Holy Spirit has never promised pardon, remission of sins, to any who stop short of baptism; but he has promised it to those who believe, repent, and are baptized. These passages show that no faith can save a sinner that does not lead him through baptism. So here are three things the Holy Spirit requires a sinner to do before he reaches the promise. But the promise of remission is positively certain to all who take these steps.

But here comes in the testimony of the individual seeking pardon. He must be able to say fully, "I have believed the gospel, have repented, have been baptized," to make the testimony complete. To be baptized is shown by Paul twice to be a burial; and since water is the element in which baptism takes place, it is, therefore, a burial in water. So when one has believed, has repented, and has been buried with Christ in baptism, he may then be as sure of the remission of sins as that the word of God is true; and this is the way "the Spirit it-

self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." This is the only way the Spirit of God gives its testimony that men are children of God. If it gives it in any other way, it has not been put to record. It is a matter of faith in the word of God from beginning to end—faith enough, in the first place, to lead one to obey the commands of the gospel, and then faith enough in the promises of the gospel to be sure they will be fulfilled whenever we obey.

This teaching misleads no one, for it is just as the history of conversions in the New Testament presents the matter; and those conversions were brought about by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. Hence, all may be sure those conversions were right. Let no one delude himself into the idea that he has been converted by the Spirit of God when he has not obeyed the commands of the Spirit as preached through the apostles and recorded in the New Testament; for those that obey not the gospel are doomed to perish in eternity. (See 2 Thess. 1: 7-9.) To obey the gospel is to do just what the gospel requires to be done. The man, therefore, who trusts to dreamy, mystical influences of the Spirit, and has not done what the Spirit says do as given through the apostles, has no evidence of the Spirit of any sort that he is a child of God.

But there is yet another item in the matter of forgiveness that is just as important as the matter we have herein been considering, and that is the forgiveness of the erring child of God. The Lord has provided two laws of pardon. He has pardoned people in all his revealed dispensations through law. The meaning of this is that obedience to the law

of pardon makes people ready for it. Pardon for wrongs, without any change in the life of the wrongdoer, would be to put a premium upon sin, would encourage sinners to wax worse and worse. So God plans always to make sinners better before he forgives them. The law of pardon that makes Christians out of sinners makes them better in heart, in life, and puts them into a better relationship. As the sinner goes through with faith, repentance, and baptism, it puts him in such condition of heart and life that he can be freely forgiven without in any sense encouraging sin. On the other hand, the whole thing encourages righteousness. So with the law of pardon to the erring Christian. When a Christian gets wrong, he needs to be made right again; for to pardon him without improving him, making him a better man, would but make him worse—would cause him to become a greater sinner than before he was pardoned. The whole purpose of the plan of salvation is to save people from their sins and to make them pure and holy. So we should not look upon these laws of pardon as working hardships upon men, but as conferring the greatest blessings upon them. No greater blessing can be bestowed upon a sinner than to make a righteous man of him.

We will take Simon, the sorcerer, as an example of this principle, as well as of the second law of pardon. He is an example to the full of both laws of pardon. He was but a wicked man, and a deceiver, a sorcerer, bewitching the people, making them believe that he was the great power of God, when Philip went to Samaria and began preaching the gospel of Christ there. The preaching caught his

attention, while the miracles performed through Philip convinced him of the truth of the preaching. The divine record says: "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." Thus he obeyed the law of pardon to the unconverted, and was thereby made a better man. He turned away from his sorcery and remained with Philip, and was astounded over what he saw and heard. He turned from his former course of life and seemed intent upon being a better man.

How long he kept this up, we are not informed; but it was long enough to show the effect of obedience to the gospel on a man. And if he had continued this new life, he would have been all right; but, unfortunately, temptation came, and he yielded and fell into sin again. Peter and John were sent down to Samaria to confer miraculous spiritual gifts upon some of the members there. Simon looked on and saw what was being done, and, instead of being benefited and strengthened in the faith, he allowed a wicked thought to enter, and gave expression to it. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost." (Acts 8: 18, 19.) This thought was very wicked, and Peter at once rebuked him firmly. "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." (Verses

20, 21.) This was a timely rebuke. Simon had used his magic arts as a profession, as a means of making money; and it may have struck him that if he had the power to confer the Holy Spirit, he could make money by that. Anyway, he was willing to pay money for the power to confer it; and whether he realized it or not, his thought carried out would have made the power to confer the Holy Spirit a matter of merchandise, would thus have degraded the great power of God.

Peter further said to him: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." (Verses 22, 23.) This is truly a heavy indictment. But he gives a possible remedy, which was to repent of the wicked thought and pray to God to be forgiven. The next verse tells all we know as to the effect of what Peter said to him: "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." (Verse 24.) This leaves him apparently in a very humble state of mind, as though he meant to try to place himself in a better attitude.

But whatever he may have done, this is a very important passage to us, in the matter of the law of pardon for the erring child of God. All are liable to do wrong, and it is evident we can carry no sin with us into heaven. We must get rid of it before we get to the judgment. It is certainly a matter of great mercy on the part of the Heavenly Father to make provision by which we can obtain remission of sins we thoughtlessly commit after com-

ing into the church. No true child of God wants to carry sin long in this life. All want to get rid of it, and want to be assured that they are rid of it. God has arranged it that way for us, if we will avail ourselves of the provisions made. Christians are required to walk by faith in all the service of God; they are never done with faith while they live. When they sin, do wrong, they must repent of the wrong, and rectify, or undo, the wrong if they can.

John says: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9.) Add this item to what was said to Simon, and we have faith, continued faith in God and his word, repentance for the sin committed, confession of that sin to God, and prayer to him that we may be forgiven. This is the law of pardon for the child of God who has sinned. It can be readily seen that obedience to this law prepares one that has done wrong for pardon. The law does not pardon, does not save; but it prepares people for God to save them. Hence the great importance of God's laws of pardon. We need this law every time we do wrong, to put us in condition to be forgiven.

God's laws are not tyrannical, nor are they intended to purchase salvation by anything we do in submitting to them. They are intended to have their effect on us, to make us ready to be forgiven; and this is the great matter for us to be concerned about. If we get ready to be pardoned, we may fully and without the least uneasiness trust the Lord to forgive us. It is all of God's grace and mercy that sinners can be saved at all. The laws and requirements of God are but means of grace to reform,

elevate, ennoble, and purify the hearts and lives of men, to fit them for his pardoning grace and mercy here and for the glories of the home beyond the grave. It is a mistake to so emphasize any act of obedience in such way as to create the impression that obedience has any sort of saving power, except to give us a character that justifies God to save us, and himself remain righteous and just. As Christians, we should strive to keep our whole lives in harmony with God's will, for it is only in this way that we can have any assurance of continued acceptance with God. It is only when we keep in close touch with the word of God and continue to do what it requires that we can have the testimony of God's Spirit, through his words, that we continue to be the accepted children of God. It is also upon this same principle of continuing to do the will of God that we can have a scriptural hope of eternal life.

In other words, there are two sides to Christianity: On the one side is what God has done and what he promises to do for man's salvation; on the other side is what he requires men to do. The Lord's part, man cannot do; man's part, the Lord will not do. Our only hope, therefore, of salvation is to faithfully do our part, which is to do his will and trust his promises; for the man that turns away from God's will and continues in sin becomes more sinful generally than before he obeyed the gospel. An apostle says: "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2 Pet. 2: 21.) It is a fearful thing, therefore, to turn away from Christ and live and die in

sin ; but in full submission, day by day, to God's will, we may always enjoy a lively hope of eternal life in the home prepared for the righteous. God has been wondrously kind in arranging the matters of salvation so that we may be fully assured of being children of God and of continued acceptance with him.

CHAPTER X.

How Does the Holy Spirit Enlighten People?

While this question is easily answered by the word of God, it is a fact that if you take the practice and teaching of the religious world to-day as an answer, there is no item in the matter of conversion in greater confusion than this. While the masses of preachers say many good things about the word of God, there are none known to the writer among the denominations that rely upon the word of the Lord in the conversion of sinners. Some rely upon an abstract operation of the Spirit of God to convict and convert the sinner. Others (and these are the more inconsistent) claim that the sinner cannot embrace and obey the word and be saved by it till the Holy Spirit comes and applies the word to the heart. The preachers that are loyal to Christ rely purely and implicitly upon the word of the Lord to convict and convert sinners. The prayer and get-religion systems of conversion of all orders universally rely upon the abstract operation of the Spirit for conversion. They do not call upon people to obey the gospel, nor do they tell them how to obey it—how to do just what the word of the Lord says do in order to be saved. They rely mainly on much prayer, singing, exhortation, and such like, and wait for the Lord to get ready to finish up the work.

This class of preachers work on the people till they get them willing to be saved; then, instead of telling them what to do to be saved, they wait for the Lord to do what he has never promised to do since time began. Men promise the people things God never promised; and as men cannot fulfill that sort of promises, they will never be fulfilled. The promises of God will always be fulfilled if the people will comply with the conditions upon which the promises were made; but the promises of men in religion are not only worthless, but deceptive and ruinous. Those that rely upon the promises of men in the matter of salvation are led away from God and from salvation. Those who promise that the Spirit of God will work in them in any way to convert them, except through the words of the Holy Spirit as preached through the apostles, are promising something that God never promised in any age or dispensation of the world's history.

Men were awfully wicked before the flood, and God determined upon their destruction unless they would repent. So Noah was made a preacher of righteousness to warn them of their approaching ruin. God said: "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh: yet shall his days be a hundred and twenty years." (Gen. 6: 3.) This is a plain indication that his Spirit would strive with men a hundred and twenty years. But how? Secretly or through words? Peter explains that for us in the New Testament. He says: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits

in prison; which some time were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water." (1 Pet. 3: 18-20.)

Christ by the Spirit went and preached—preached through Noah by inspiring him to do the work. The preaching was done to disobedient people, and done while the ark was preparing; but their spirits were in prison when Peter wrote, reserved to the great day of judgment. Thus the Spirit of God strove with those people before the flood, but to no purpose. They refused to be warned and to repent, and were destroyed by the flood because of their sins and because they would not repent.

If there was any secret operation of God's Spirit upon one single soul during this affair, there was not one word of record made of it. There is plenty of evidence that preaching was done, and that it was done by the Spirit of Christ through Noah, and that it was done while the ark was being prepared. This has been God's way of moving men from the beginning. What else was needed when the Spirit went and preached to them? Could any other sort of operation have effected more than the words of the Spirit addressed to their understanding? Most assuredly not. If those people had heard and heeded that preaching, had repented of their sins, they evidently would have been spared. This was the purport of Noah's preaching. The expression, "a preacher of righteousness," clearly indicates that Noah taught them to cease from their sins and live righteously. It also shows the great mercy of God

in affording them such an opportunity after they had become so rebellious and sinful.

God spoke to Abraham, and told him plainly what to do, and promised great blessings to him in consequence of obedience to his words. When Abraham was an old man, and had obeyed God in the matter of offering his son as a burnt offering, God spoke to him again, saying: "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." He then repeated the leading promises he had made to him, adding: "Because thou hast obeyed my voice." Abraham heard the word of God, obeyed it, and was blessed. He stands before the world to-day as an example of the sufficiency of God's word. Abraham was a man of faith; he heard, believed, obeyed, and was blessed. He is set before us as an example in these matters. But if a secret operation were to come upon people and convert them, it would do away with obedience, would render it null and void. There would be no place for it, and nothing for it to accomplish. The disobedient have no promise.

People accuse those who insist upon obedience to the requirements of the gospel in order to be saved, of preaching a salvation of works, of trying to be "saved by their own works." I have been hearing this accusation ever since I began to hear the plain truth preached. Those who reject the word of God and wait for some other power are the ones that pervert the word of God and destroy obedience, the only thing that can lead to the promises of God. But we pass on to other scripture illustrations of this subject.

When God gave the law of Moses to the Jews,

he first spoke the Ten Commandments to them, and then wrote them on two tables of stone. Then from time to time he gave the remainder of the law to Moses, directing him to write it down, which he did. In these records the Jewish people were told that if they would be obedient to these laws, would hearken to all the precepts and ordinances of the Lord that had been given them, they should be blessed above all other people, should be blessed in their basket and in their store, and in every other way that would make a happy and prosperous people. But this was not all. He told them, on the other hand, that if they would not obey his commandments as written in the book of the law, they should be cursed and afflicted more than any others. And all who have read the Bible know that these promised blessings all came when they were obedient, and that the curses came when they were disobedient.

At one time in the life of Moses the people were so heedless and hard to control that he asked the Lord to take his life away, rather than to impose so great a burden upon him as to require him to govern such a disobedient people alone. The Lord, however, had a better remedy than that. He told him to select seventy men, elders of Israel, and bring them out to the tabernacle; that he would meet with him there, and take of the Spirit that was upon him and put it upon them, that they might assist him in governing the people, so he would not have to bear it all alone. Moses did as commanded, and the Lord fulfilled his promise, and put the Spirit upon the seventy to the extent that "they prophesied, and did not cease." Even two

of the men that did not go out to the tabernacle received the Spirit and prophesied in their tents. Read this in the eleventh chapter of Numbers. This was a miraculous, inspiring power of the Spirit, that inspired them to govern the people according to the law, and thus assist Moses, who was already abundantly inspired, in governing the people. Thus the Holy Spirit was given miraculously to a few men, enabling them to speak the word of God to the masses, and teach them the good and the right way.

It is wonderfully encouraging to see the power and sufficiency of the word of God as manifested in the history of those people. All that they needed to do to be led by the Spirit was to obey the commandments of the law of Moses. They were promised abundant blessings if they would obey the law as it was written. King David was inspired, and he said: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." (2 Sam. 23: 2.) God's Spirit teaches people in words addressed to their understanding. God, through Isaiah, says: "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the Lord speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." (Isa. 45: 19.) And again: "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me." (Isa. 48: 16.) These passages show that God never spoke secretly, without words. He has always spoken to people in their own language, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty as to what his will is.

God again says to the Jewish people: "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8: 19, 20.) From these passages it is clear that we can rely upon no sort of secret influences. They will all lead people away from the word of God, and thus destroy the influence of the only thing that can lead us in the path of safety, which is the word of God. From the above passages we may safely say that throughout the whole of the Old Testament the people were taught by the Holy Spirit, but never by a secret, abstract operation. From the beginning to the end it always taught through words. We believe that untold mischief is being constantly done by making the impression that the Spirit convicts and converts people in any other way than through words.

But what about the New Testament? How does the Spirit do its work here? By talking to and teaching the people? We will see. John the Baptist is the first preacher presented to us in this volume. He was foretold in the Old Testament in the following words: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." (Isa. 40: 3.) This very plainly indicates that John would be a preacher; that he should cry, should proclaim something. When he came, he did precisely what this passage indicates he should do. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the

wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3: 1, 2.) He was, therefore, a preacher, a proclaimer of Heaven's truth, telling the people in words what to do. He was a man sent from God; he was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth; he was a great prophet; he was to make ready a people for the Lord; he was to do a grand work, and did it by preaching. The Spirit did the preaching through him; hence, the work of John was well done. To make ready a people and to introduce Jesus to Israel was no small matter. None but an inspired man could have done the work he did, nor would the Lord have intrusted such a work to any but an inspired man. What more could an abstract operation of the Spirit do in such a work than the Spirit itself could do through its own words? We cannot conceive of a more important work than was done by the Spirit through John by speaking to them in their own language. John was a great talker, a great teacher, and a wonderful worker. The Holy Spirit through him wrought the most wonderful revolution where he preached that had ever been produced among the people of that section.

The next preacher of the New Testament was the Son of God himself. His teaching was all new, and the most startling that had ever been heard on this earth. When he had finished the Sermon on the Mount, the people were astonished, and said: "He speaks as one having authority, and not as the scribes." It was the talking that astonished them so much. They had never heard anything like it. On another occasion, when the high priests had sent

officers to arrest him, they found him talking, and they stopped to listen. They had never heard any such talking before. They were filled with awe, and would not try to arrest him. They returned to those that sent them, and these said: "Why have ye not brought him?" They said: "Never man spake like this man." These passages, and very many others of like import, show how the Savior did his work. The Spirit talked through him, and thus made its impressions by and through words spoken to the people in their own languages wherein they were born.

Again: "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." (John 3: 34.) The Spirit was given to men in measures, depending on what they were to do; but to Jesus, without measure, without limit. He was given such an abundant supply of the Spirit as to enable him to speak or do anything necessary for him to do or say to show himself to be the Son of God, and do anything and everything needful to be done in providing a complete plan of salvation for men. So the Holy Spirit taught and worked abundantly through the Son of God, who did the most wonderful work that had ever been done on this earth—a work that will last through time and through eternity. But if we credit this work to a secret operation of the Spirit among and upon the people while Jesus was on earth, it would set aside, destroy, set at naught, the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the Son of God.

But how about the conversion of sinners under the gospel dispensation, since all miraculous operations have ceased? This is simply a plain, scrip-

tural matter, to be settled by the word of the Lord. When Jesus had arisen from the dead, and before he ascended, he commanded the apostles to go "into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and to begin this proclamation at Jerusalem, and to wait, tarry in Jerusalem, till they should "be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24: 46-49.) This power from on high meant the Holy Spirit which Jesus had already promised to his apostles. He said to them before this time, when he foretold the suffering and trials they would have to undergo as his apostles: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." (Matt. 10: 19, 20.) The Holy Spirit, therefore, was to come upon them and be a power within them that should speak through them. Jesus said to them again: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. . . . Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." (John 16: 7-14.) And again: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your

remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14: 26.)

These are a few of the promises of the Holy Spirit which was to be given to the apostles. It should be observed that the Spirit was to come upon the apostles, not to the world; yet its coming upon the apostles was to be for the benefit of the world. He shall "reprove [that is, shall convince or convict] the world of sin." The benefits of its coming were to be to the world; yet it was to come directly upon the apostles, and through them speak to the world to convict and convert them. It was never promised to come directly to the world to convert them. This fact of itself would forever destroy the whole idea of conversion by an abstract influence of the Spirit upon them to convert them; and, besides, it was emphatically said of the Spirit: "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14: 17.) This is a final settlement of the question of abstract spiritual influence upon the heart of the sinner, since he cannot receive it. When Jesus says a thing cannot be, that settles it.

On the other hand, when the Spirit came upon the apostles to inspire them, the purpose of it was to speak to the world through them, and thereby teach them the way of salvation, teach the gospel and its requirements, what they must do to be saved, to become children of God. Conversion, therefore, by the Holy Spirit is no mere matter of inward, secret, emotional impressions, without words or motives, but of plain, intelligent teaching through words, telling what Christ has done to prepare the

plan, and what the sinner must do in order to be saved, and in such plainness that he may know just when he has the right to claim that his past sins are pardoned.

In this way the sinner is not left to his feelings as to the evidence of his acceptance with God, but it is a matter of plain understanding of, and faith in, the word of God; and since the word of God is good for all it calls for, this is all that is needed in order to rejoice and be happy in the precious promises of God. In this case the happy feelings result from faith in God and his promises. But in the idea of conversion and pardon through an abstract operation, God's order is reversed, and the feelings are taken as the evidence of acceptance with God, which puts faith in the word and promise of God entirely out of the question, and makes the whole a mere matter of excited feelings.

There are many also that claim a baptism of the Holy Spirit in connection with conversion. They claim that such passages as speak of being baptized into Christ, and of being buried with him in baptism, and such like, mean the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and not water baptism. In the next chapter we will notice this claim and its absurdity. We will also show from examples of the preaching of the apostles and the actual conversion of sinners how the Spirit did that work.

It is hard to estimate how much it is worth to us to correctly understand the plan of salvation, to have a clear understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit. Those who so earnestly advocate an abstract operation of the Spirit do not realize that no one on earth knows one single thing about the Holy

Spirit in any sense—not even that there is any Holy Spirit, except as the words of the Spirit in the Bible make it known, and nothing about its work, except as made known by the words of the Spirit; and it is a significant fact that the word of God, the word of the Holy Spirit, does not reveal one thing about conversion by any secret operation. The Bible is utterly silent upon the whole matter. The whole idea, therefore, is imagination, and a human delusion which utterly counteracts the word of God, the only channel through which the Spirit leads man into salvation.

CHAPTER XI.

How the Spirit of God Makes Christians.

Since the baptism of the Spirit is supposed by many to play a conspicuous part in making Christians, we first give attention to that. John the Baptist is the first to mention it, and he mentions it as something Christ was to do. "I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire." (Matt. 3: 11.)

Two or three things are worthy of note in this passage. First, that Christ was the one, and the only one, to administer the baptism of the Spirit. Men never administered it. It never was placed in the hands of men to baptize any one in the Holy Spirit. This was reserved for Christ alone. Men are required to baptize people in water, but not in the Spirit. In the second place, the baptism in the Spirit was a promise, but not a command. Not one human being was ever commanded to be baptized in the Spirit.

This statement of John is repeated in Luke 3: 16, and partly repeated by Mark (1: 8). Matthew and Luke both state that he (Christ) would also baptize in fire. Mark does not mention the baptism in fire. Christ, just before he ascended to heaven, and when talking to the apostles for the last time on earth,

said: "For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." (Acts 1: 5.) In this passage, as in Mark, nothing is said about a baptism of fire. Matthew and Luke both mention the fire, and both speak of it as unquenchable. John the Baptist was speaking to a mixed multitude, and spoke of two baptisms—one in the Holy Spirit, and the other in fire. They were specifically two elements, and it is not to be understood that both these elements were to be united in one baptism. The apostles were to be baptized in the Holy Spirit; and the wicked, all the finally impenitent, will be baptized in the fire that is never to be quenched. The passages in Matthew and Luke both represent the final judgment in connection with the statement concerning these baptisms. Matthew says of Christ: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his thrashing-floor; and he will gather his wheat into the garner, but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire." The wheat represents the righteous, who, at the judgment, will be separated from the wicked and received into heaven, while the wicked will be "cast into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This is evidently the baptism of fire foretold by John the Baptist in connection with the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

So in this investigation we are only called upon to consider the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In the passage quoted from the first chapter of Acts, Jesus promised it directly to the apostles, and that within a few days. The question now is: For what purpose were these apostles that had been so long with Christ, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? Was it

to save them? Certainly not; for they had been the disciples of Christ for three years and a half, and he was going to intrust the great work of proclaiming the gospel to the whole world to their care. In doing so important a work, they needed special qualifications. Christ had taught them many things regarding the kingdom he had come to establish, but they would not likely remember all and know how to apply it; and, besides, many things pertaining to the gospel and the conversion of sinners had not been told them, so that they needed further information regarding them. All this had been foretold to them through the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, that had been promised them; but up to the time Christ ascended, this divine Helper had not been received. All this was to be accomplished in this promised baptism the Savior gave them at the time of his ascension to heaven.

They were told to tarry in Jerusalem till they should receive power from on high, showing clearly that they were not fully prepared for the work laid out for them, and would not be until additional power should come from heaven. So in about one week from the time the promise was made it was fulfilled under very wonderful and impressive circumstances. The work they were to do was so vastly important that there was to be no shadow of doubt that they were delivering messages from God. It was necessary, not only that the people to whom they preached should be satisfied the message they heard was divine, but that the people through all coming time should have the same assurance.

These facts enable us to begin to see what was

to be the purpose of this promised baptism of the Holy Spirit. So we will now look into some of the details of this occurrence. "And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place." "They"—who?" it may be asked. In the close of the preceding chapter the apostles are spoken of, the word "apostles" being the last word. Then, in the passage above quoted, immediately following, the pronoun "they" relates to the word "apostles." It is certain, therefore, that the apostles were present on that memorable day, the day of Pentecost—the very ones to whom the commission was given to "go . . . into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." This was one of the most astonishing events that ever occurred in the far-famed city of Jerusalem. The sound of a rushing mighty wind is terrific and alarming. Then the things they saw, the divided tongues appearing and sitting upon each one of the apostles, and their beginning to speak in other languages, dialects they had never learned, were enough to make every one see and realize that the whole thing was from God.

This was indeed a fulfillment of what the Savior had promised but a week before; it was a baptism of the Holy Spirit; and it becomes perfectly plain as to what was the purpose of this baptism. The

time had come for the proclamation of the gospel, and they were in the right place to begin; they had been plainly told to begin in the city of Jerusalem. This was the great metropolis of the Jewish nation, the city in which the great tragedy of the mock trial of the Son of God and of the cross occurred, and only fifty days after those awful things were enacted. The Jews had claimed that Christ was an impostor, was only a man, and not the Son of God, and had hired the guard that watched the tomb to report that the disciples had stolen the body away while they slept; and thus they sought to put out all evidences that Jesus was the Son of God. So far as the record shows, Christ never showed himself to the masses of the people after he rose from the dead. He showed himself several times to his disciples, and one time to five hundred at once, but never one time to the unbelieving Jews, who were still believing that he was an impostor, and thought they had demonstrated that fact in that they were able to put him to death. They did not yet realize that it was God's will that he should die for the salvation of the world, nor that they made themselves murderers; yet they carried out just what God intended should be done. Now for these uneducated Galilean apostles to preach to these unbelieving murderers of Jesus in any way that would get their attention, there was a necessity that the miraculous power of God should be manifested in and upon the preachers, so there could be no doubt that God was with them. Moreover, it was necessary that the beginning of the proclamation of the gospel should be of such character as not only to convince the Jewish people there of its truth, but

to furnish sufficient evidence to be handed down through all future generations, even to the end of time, that the whole matter of the Christian religion is divine.

All this was accomplished by that miraculous baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was all miraculous; the unusual sound when the Holy Spirit came, the divided tongues and their firelike appearance, and the unexpected preaching those men did on that day—preaching that was so far above their natural abilities that it all conspired to leave no doubt upon those who witnessed the occasion that the mighty power of God was in the whole affair; and so thorough was this conviction that neither at the time nor in all after years was there one voice raised to show that the things which were reported on that day did not occur.

This was one of the strangest occasions of all time. It introduced the religion of Christ to the Jews, and, some seven or eight years later, to the Gentile world, at the house of Cornelius, by a similar event—that is, through another baptism of the Holy Spirit. Not only these things, but the sacred volume we call the New Testament has come either directly or indirectly from the powers and influences that started on that day.

These, in the main, make up the purpose of the miraculous baptism of the Holy Spirit; and after the house of Cornelius, there was never another occurrence of this sort of baptism, so far as the divine record shows.

When the purposes of the baptism of the Holy Spirit had been completed, the apostles were then full of the Spirit, and ready to give utterance to the

words dictated by the Spirit as needed. Jerusalem was full of Jewish people, attendant upon one of their feasts, and very quickly there was a large audience collected to hear them. "And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language." No wonder they were confounded! They knew the speakers were Galileans, that they were not educated, that they were not known to be orators even in their own mother tongue; but now to hear them speaking so fluently in so many different languages, they were just carried away with amazement, there being seventeen different languages present on that occasion, and all hearing in their own native tongues.

It was unaccountable to them. Some hardened ones began to mock and to accuse them of being full of new wine. "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words." A large audience is now gathered, and Peter now becomes the chief speaker, and demands attention to his words. He was there to talk, and had something to say, and wanted them to hear it. Let it be remembered that Peter was simply speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance. The first part of his speech was explanatory of the unusual things they saw and heard—that it was a fulfillment of prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This explained, he called attention a second time to what he was about to say, thus: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by

mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

This quotation gives the facts of the gospel that was to be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. These facts, that Christ was crucified, died for our sins, and arose from the dead, are the very life and soul of the whole matter of life and salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. These facts, with their attendant precepts and promises, are what Paul meant when he said: "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And as the Holy Spirit was doing the preaching through Peter, we may be perfectly certain it was right.

Having preached these foundation facts of the gospel, the speaker goes on to establish the resurrection of Christ from the Jewish scriptures, showing to the Jews from their own prophecies that Christ was to be raised from the dead, and that their scriptures had foretold the very things he was preaching. In connection with his argument on the resurrection from the dead, he showed that Christ was then seated at the right hand of God, and that he, having received from his Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, had sent forth the wonderful demonstrations they then saw and heard; that they were then listening to the teaching of the power Jesus had himself sent down from heaven. This was a

complete climax in the presentation of the gospel to those people. Then the Spirit said: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified." This is an exceedingly strong demand for faith in the Son of God and in the gospel as presented on that day. It was a bold and independent statement to their faces that the same Jesus whom they crucified was then both Lord and Christ at the right hand of God in heaven.

Never on this earth was a grander sermon preached by mortal man than this. It was not the work of Peter, but of the Holy Spirit speaking through him. It shows what a work the promised baptism of the Spirit was to do for the apostles. This work enabled every Jew in Jerusalem that was willing to open his eyes to realize that the preaching was thoroughly divine. The apostle could no more have preached such a sermon at such a time without divine aid than he could have created a world. So the vast crowd assembled there that day saw and realized that the whole thing was a divine demonstration, and that, therefore, the things preached that day were true, and they believed them.

In believing these things, they realized that they were the betrayers and murderers of Jesus of Nazareth, and that great guilt was upon them on account of it. They were greatly moved by it, and they were anxious to know how they could escape this great guilt. "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?" The asking of this question indicates two

or three important items. First, it indicates that they fully believed the truths that had been preached; that they then believed that the One they had given their voices against was truly the Son of God, and that they had greatly sinned in the condemnation of the Just One. It also shows they had confidence in the ability of the apostles to tell them how they could be forgiven and saved from so great a sin in rejecting one so pure and holy as was the Son of God. In the next place, it indicated that they were willing to do anything in their power to escape the wrath of God.

They evidently impressed the speakers that they were in such earnestness of heart that they were ready to do anything the Lord might require of them. So the answer was promptly given: "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Now let it be remembered that this answer was by the Holy Spirit. Peter only spoke as the Spirit gave him utterance. Simply as a man, Peter would not have known how to answer it, because, up to that moment, it had not been revealed; so no man then, as a man, knew what was requisite in the matter of becoming a Christian, in obtaining the remission of past sins. But in this case we have the whole matter given directly from heaven by the Holy Spirit, and there can be no doubt about its truth.

Three steps of obedience were required of them on that day. The first was faith, as already presented. The next, repentance, as a positive command: "Repent." This word "repent" involves a

change of life, a turning away from sin and a turning into the service of God. The next step is to be baptized; and this step is to be taken in the name, by the authority, of Christ. All authority in the whole matter of salvation was given into his hand when he died and rose again. This baptism is also "unto"—or, still more literally, "into"—the remission of sins. That is the final end to which all these steps tend. The word "for" may very easily be misunderstood and misapplied in the obedience of the sinner; but to say "into remission" is plainer, and shows perfectly at what time the sinner receives pardon, without any room for misunderstanding or misapplying a word in the sentence, while "into" is the literal meaning of the word rendered "for" in the Authorized Version. The strongest emphasis that can be put upon these three conditions of pardon is that each one is positively and emphatically required of God, and the promise of pardon to him that does them.

These are the things the Holy Spirit required on the day of Pentecost, and no man that rejects these, or any one of them, has any promise of salvation from the Lord. Not only were these conditions required of those people; but the Holy Spirit, through Peter, exhorted them most earnestly to accept, embrace, the requirements. The history of these conversions closes in the following words: "They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." We have herein quoted all of the second chapter of Acts that especially bears upon the conversion of the three thousand so as to show in the Spirit's own words, and that in an unmis-

takable manner, how the Spirit converts sinners, how it makes Christians of them.

Since we have the whole matter in the very words of the Spirit, we are ready to say, in all confidence, that all that do just what the three thousand did will be converted just as they were, and by the same Holy Spirit; while those who do not do these things, no matter what else they may do, have no right to claim they were converted by the Holy Spirit. Shall we, then, follow the Holy Spirit or the wisdom of men in this matter? No man can say the three thousand were not Christians without saying the word of God is not true, for Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The Holy Spirit says: "Repent, . . . and be baptized . . . unto [into] the remission of your sins." Thus remission of sins is promised on doing just what the Spirit said do, and what the same Spirit says the three thousand did. Hence, on the other hand, to admit that they were Christians is to admit that as the way the Holy Spirit makes Christians; and since that is the only way in which people were made Christians in the days of the apostles, therefore those who rely upon anything else as conversion are without any promise from God that they are pardoned.

Uninspired men tell sinners several things these days that are not hinted at in this chapter, and promise them salvation when they do them; and when they accept these outside opinions of men, they have not even the shadow of a promise from God that they will be saved. Human opinions cannot save men; therefore those that rely upon such things are deluded, are led to rely upon man's wisdom in-

stead of the wisdom and power of God, and are thus stranded by the doctrines and commandments of men. These things are indeed sad, but true; yet they are told the Holy Spirit does the work for them. Modern meetings are wholly unlike the meetings we read about in the New Testament. In the meeting on the day of Pentecost, which we have had before us in this discourse, about three thousand were baptized in one day. But this meeting was conducted by the Holy Spirit; while these modern meetings are conducted by uninspired men, who are not satisfied with the simple way the Spirit of God conducted them, and get up new devices of their own, and the people accept them, and are thus led away from the wisdom and word of God, and are deluded into accepting things wholly unknown to the oracles of God.

Another item in the Lord's way is that in going the way the Spirit directs, we are thereby led into Christ; for it takes the things the Holy Spirit directs to put us into him. In the commission Jesus gave the apostles, he said: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28: 19.) It takes faith, repentance, and baptism to get into Christ, because people cannot get to baptism till they believe and repent; nor can they complete the work of getting into Christ by faith and repentance, for the above says: "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." So there is no way of getting into Christ, except the way the Holy Spirit led the three thousand into him. Those who try any other way will fail.

CHAPTER XII.

Sufficiency and Power of the Word of God.

This is a subject every child of God should investigate very carefully. By a large portion of the religious world at the present time the word of God is regarded as insufficient, both in the conversion of sinners and in the work, worship, and government of the church. With a large part of the denominational world the word of God is wholly insufficient for the conversion of sinners. None of their preachers rely upon the word of God to convert people. They may differ as to wherein the word is insufficient, but in one way or another they all make that point. Some say the word is a dead letter, and, therefore, totally unable to convict and convert the sinner. These generally claim, also, that the sinner is totally depraved, and, therefore, unable to understand and obey the word until the Spirit shall enter and quicken and convert the soul.

Of course those who believe either one of these never attempt to teach the word to the sinner as preached by the apostles, nor make any attempt to lead him to obey the word. Why should they, when they think both the sinner and the word are dead? The word of God, if dead, surely would have no power to move one that is dead. Either one of these theories entirely destroys all effect of the word, and it would be supreme folly for any man that be-

believes either of them to attempt to teach or impress the word of God upon a dead heart, or to try to induce any sort of a heart to obey a dead and powerless word. Either one of these doctrines leaves the sinner exposed to just any wind of doctrine the preacher may present, which generally deludes and leads him to depend upon some dreamy, mystical influence, instead of leading him to depend upon and obey the plain word of the Lord, as did the apostles. In this way thousands are cheated out of the benefits of the gospel and the salvation of their souls, though Jesus died to save them.

Then there are others that, while they talk about the importance of the word of God, will tell the sinner the word can never affect and move his heart till the Spirit comes and applies the word and makes it effective. This idea also will prevent people from attempting to understand and obey the word and be saved. The men that advocate these theories entirely destroy the influence of the word of God, and never fail to substitute something in its place the Bible says nothing about. Thus the word of God is made void by the doctrines and commandments of men.

Those who do not believe the word of God is sufficient to guide in the worship, work, and government of the church, make null and void the word of God in these things, and put human legislation, human wisdom, and human creeds in its place. Each church has its own fancies, inventions, and creeds, by which the members are governed. Hence, some churches are governed by one code of human wisdom, and some by another; but all churches not governed by the word of God are gov-

erned by human wisdom. This is self-evident, and no need of argument to support it. No matter what the origin or name, every religious organization on earth not governed by the word of God is not only controlled by human wisdom, but is itself, of necessity, a human organization. It is over human wisdom that divisions exist; and on account of the human wisdom that is in them, these divisions are perpetuated. All religious people that are governed in all things by the word of God are one. But the proper thing to do in regard to these matters is to examine the word of God, and see if anywhere in all the Bible there was ever any defect, weakness, or any sort of insufficiency in the word of God for the accomplishment of any end the Lord intended it to accomplish; see if there was ever an instance in which the word of God failed because of inefficiency in it, or any case in which any other power had to be added, such as sending the Holy Spirit to apply or in any way make it effective.

When, in the work of creation, God said, "Let there be light," we are immediately told: "And there was light." "And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so." "And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so." "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own

image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Just as was expressed in his word, all these things were done.

The whole of the first chapter of Genesis is given precisely the same way. By the power and wisdom of God his word was executed and the work of creation was accomplished. There is nothing grander in human language than the above. We do not need to put our imaginations to work to try to determine the way that light was brought into existence; it is quite enough for us to believe what is plainly said: "Let there be light: and there was light." It would but be bewildering to try to tell anything about this wonderful passage more than is plainly expressed in the words used. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." (Ps. 33: 9.) These things David said in connection with the mighty work of creation. One thing is perfectly certain in these matters; and that is, the word of God was not a dead letter when the universe was made. "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." (Verse 6.) So all this universe was made by the word of God. To read such passages and then say the word of God is a dead letter, is to discard the truth of the Bible. The trouble in the whole matter is, men do not believe what the word of God says.

God said he would bring a flood upon the earth and destroy man, whom he had created. It is evident the Lord meant it would be so unless they would repent, for he sent Noah to them, a preacher of righteousness, endowed by the Spirit of Christ; but they regarded him not. Then all that was ex-

pressed in the words regarding the flood and the destruction of man was accomplished. The word of God, then, was just as Paul expressed it in the New Testament: "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword." (Heb. 4: 12.) The power necessary to bring those words to pass was in God, who uttered the words, and all that was expressed was accomplished, and all were destroyed, except Noah and his family, and they were saved by the word of God. God told Noah what to do, and he did it and was saved, just as the word of God said. Noah built the ark when God told him to do so, and built it just as God said, and did everything connected with it just as the word of God said, took everything into it he was commanded, and was saved just as the word said. Those words were living, active words, and accomplished their end. If the rest of those antediluvians had obeyed the preaching, had repented of their sins, had turned from all their evil ways, and had submitted to the will of the Lord, that obedience would have put them in proper condition to be saved, would have given them a character that would have justified God in sparing them; but they did not, and, like many others, were destroyed for their sins.

These things show very clearly the sufficiency and power of the word; but there is no power in all the universe that will save sinners when they refuse to obey the word of God and go on in sin and rebellion against God. There is no power that will force men to do God's will. That is left to man's choice. When men are willing to accept and obey the word, God always blesses them. When they reject the

word and refuse to obey, ruin will follow. The word of God would have saved those people before the flood if they had only repented at the preaching of Noah as the Ninevites did at the preaching of Jonah. They were saved because they so repented at the preaching of Jonah as to fit them to be saved. It was then just as much God's will to spare Nineveh as it would have been for him to destroy it if they had refused to repent. So sinners must get out of their sins to be spared and saved, for God will not save them in their sins.

When God commanded Moses and Aaron to speak to the rock in Horeb, he would have continued to bless and exalt them among the Jewish people if they had obeyed him; but they disobeyed him, and spoke to the people instead of speaking to the rock, and then smote the rock, which God had not commanded. On account of this they both were doomed to die outside the promised land, and the word of God that told them so was literally carried out. It would have been so much more pleasing to the Lord to bless them, had they obeyed him, than it was to thus doom them. "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord Jehovah: wherefore turn yourselves, and live." (Ezek. 18: 32.) So when the sinner rejects the word of God and is doomed, or lost, it is his own fault. He could have obeyed if he would, and God would have taken much greater delight in saving him in his obedience than in dooming him for his disobedience.

God, through Isaiah, said: "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and

maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." (Isa. 55: 10, 11.) This is what God himself says about his own word. This is in a prophecy concerning the plan of salvation, and it expresses a principle that is always true in regard to the word of God. The rain and the snow accomplish the ends God ordained them to accomplish, and so his word will accomplish the things he ordained for it to accomplish.

All that God ever foretold about Christ, and what he was to do, has been or will yet be accomplished, until the last soul that embraces it and lives it out shall be eternally saved by it, and all who reject it shall be lost, just as foretold. God foretold the town in which Christ was to be born, which was Bethlehem. He foretold the Egyptian trip, saying: "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." He foretold he should be called a Nazarene, and he was, as he dwelt at Nazareth. He also foretold most beautiful things about his life and teaching, and every Bible reader knows they were all fulfilled. Everybody that has read the New Testament, or knows anything about its teaching, knows that every word of prophecy regarding the Son of God was fulfilled to the very letter.

His wisdom was such as no one had ever possessed on this earth before. He was so full of divine wisdom and knowledge that he always knew in a moment what to say, when to say it, to whom, and how to say it. He needed not to call the wise

and great among men to counsel with them what to say or what to do. He had within him all the counsel he needed, and was always ready in a moment to answer the most difficult questions the wisest of earth could ask, and in a way that would always put his enemies to silence and make them ashamed of themselves. The shrewdest enemies he had on earth would plan and counsel together, and frame difficulties they thought it impossible for him to solve without being caught on the one side or the other; and yet he would answer without a moment's study, and answer in a way that their tact and shrewdness could not do a thing with, and they would always realize they were beaten, while he was in full triumph over them. He never had occasion to ask even the Sanhedrin, the highest and wisest council known on this earth, one single thing as to what to say or do; and yet he never made a mistake. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and always guided him in the right way.

Let those who claim that the word of God is a dead letter explain how these prophecies concerning him were so accurately and wonderfully fulfilled. God had sent forth these words, and they did not return void. They brought out the very end intended by Him who uttered them.

Again, Isaiah said, regarding the influence of the life and teaching of Jesus: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. . . . They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the

sea." (Isa. 11: 6-9.) All readers of the New Testament know that the very characteristics of peace, unity, and harmlessness indicated by these utterances have been manifested wherever the teaching of Christ and the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the apostles have gone, as has been apparent in the lives of all those that have yielded their hearts and lives to this teaching, and will be to the close of time; for the teaching of Christ and his apostles will always produce such characters in all that place themselves under its controlling influence and power. The meekness of the lamb was always manifested in the life of the Son of God, while the savageness of the wolf and lion will be brought down to the peacefulness of the lamb in all sinners who embrace the gospel and live as Jesus and the apostles have taught. Wonderful indeed are the words of God that were delivered so long ago in regard to the results of the religion of Christ, and which have already been accomplished, and which will through all time and eternity continue to develop the characteristics so strikingly foretold in them.

And when we come to examine the teaching of the New Testament, there is a continued development of these principles, the sufficiency and power of the word of God. John the Baptist accomplished marvelous things by preaching the plain word of the Lord. It was said of him before his birth: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God." (Luke 1: 16.) This indicates a wonderful work for John. The history of him as given in the four Gospels shows that he did do a wonderful work, even all that was foretold of him.

But how did he do so great a work? By preaching the word of God. It was not by his own wisdom and power that he did this great work. He preached the word of God by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and it was the word of God, believed and obeyed, that did the work. So the word of God through John made ready a people for the Lord. In this way he prepared men to be the apostles of the Son of God, and many other men, besides those godly women, who took such an interest in the great and wonderful work Christ did, the astonishing miracles he performed, and who were so tenderly devoted to him. They were the first ones to report that he had risen from the dead on the morning of the first day of the week. The word that John preached was the word of God, dictated, inspired, by the Holy Spirit. Hence, it was only needful for those people to hear that word, receive it into their hearts, and obey it from their hearts, in order for it to transform them into the servants, the followers, of Christ. There was power enough in the word of God to do all that was done for those people when they received it into their hearts and lives and gave it a chance. What stronger illustration does any one need of the power and sufficiency of the word of God than the effect the word that John preached had upon their hearts and lives in turning them to God and preparing them to be fellow-workers with Christ in the great work of salvation?

Then, when Christ began his personal ministry, he did a still more powerful work than John. In the first place, when Jesus had been baptized, he fell into the most important conflict that ever was planned by the power of Satan. It was nothing

less than a deeply laid scheme to draw Christ from the grand mission upon which he had come into the world, and thus defeat the redemption of man by leading the intended Redeemer into the service of Satan. No tongue can express the loss to this world if Satan could have accomplished his end. And why did he not? Jesus was clothed in human flesh, as were Adam and Eve; and we all know how easy it is for human flesh to yield to temptation. Eden, with all its charms, was lost that way. It is certain, too, that Christ was tempted in all things like as we are. How, then, was that awful catastrophe averted? Simply by the word of God. Jesus had the word of God in mind, which is the very power God has ordained to keep men from yielding to temptation.

Satan knew man's weakest point. He had already led man into sin and ruin and defeated all the endearments of the earthly paradise God had established for man. He shrewdly watched his chances, and made his attack when Christ had fasted forty days and forty nights, and when every fiber and every muscle in his body was demanding food, and when hunger was at its very highest tension, and said: "If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." Jesus, though so hungry, had the right weapon ready for his defense, which was his Father's word. "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That was enough. It was the word of God. Jesus knew it, and determined to stand by it. There was nothing left that Satan could do. He knew he could not overcome

the power of God, knew that God takes care of those that obey him. Jesus was firm in doing his Father's will. This was a complete defense. Satan, as soon as he saw that Jesus was determined to stand by the word of his Father, gave up that line of temptation, and the victory to Jesus was complete—all gained through the word of God. The other two trials were overcome and complete victories gained by the Savior the same way.

What a beautiful and forcible illustration of the power of God's word! His word, obeyed, will save all of us; rejected, it will condemn us all. Those who obey are saved because their obedience prepares them to be saved, and God has promised and is able to save all such. Jesus says of his sheep, those who follow him: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." (John 10: 28, 29.) So all the power of heaven is pledged to save all those who faithfully do the will of God. Doing the will of God makes the character that God promises to save, and no other power can prevent it. This is the way the word of God is "able to save the soul." Yet so many have been turned away from the word of God and lost by being taught that it is dead, will not save, or something else thrust upon them instead of the word of God, which alone can prepare the soul for salvation, and then only when obeyed. How sad that there are so many people that have no confidence in the sufficiency and power of the word of

God, and that thus the blind lead the blind into the ditch altogether!

The gospel of the Son of God as expressed in words has life-producing power in it, and will save unless other things hinder. The god of this world may blind and hinder; but the gospel, received and obeyed, will certainly save. The parables of Jesus, as that of the sower, abundantly show that the gospel of Christ as preached by the apostles is able to save the whole world, if they will obey it. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 15, 16.) When the gospel was preached on the day of Pentecost and at Solomon's portico, many heard, believed, were baptized, and saved. Many thousands are spoken of in Acts of Apostles that heard, believed, repented, were baptized, and saved from their past sins. In all the conversions recorded in this book there is not a hint of there being any other sort of converting power present to apply the word preached to the hearts of the people. Nothing of the sort was needed, since it was the Holy Spirit itself that did the preaching. If the Spirit itself cannot impress, move, and convert people through its own words addressed to the understanding of men, in reason's name, what can? Jesus said: "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." (John 6: 63.) The word of God, therefore, spoken to us by the Holy Spirit through Christ and the apostles, will as cer-

tainly impart spiritual life as that the word of God is true.

The gospel is God's power to save, and comes to us in words, the words of the Holy Spirit, with the promise of salvation to all that obey its requirements; and is not God just as able to fulfill his promises now as he was to fulfill the prophecies concerning Christ? To say the word of God is a dead letter is simply to discount the whole Bible, from the first sentence of the book of Genesis to the last "Amen" of Revelation. Is it not strange that men set aside the word of God which has all the power of God, of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit to back it, and then thrust upon the people the opinions of men, which have nothing under heaven to back them or fulfill them but men, when God says, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps?" And is it not equally strange that men will accept the opinions of men and risk the eternal interests of their souls upon them, when they have in their own homes the precious word of God just as God gave it, and in their own tongue wherein they were born?

Why not all say with the godly Joshua: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?" This can be done only by hearing, believing, and obeying the word of God and trusting his divine and precious promises. "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock." (Matt. 7: 24, 25.) "To him that overcometh, to him will

I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." (Rev. 2: 7.) Surely the word of God in its own simplicity ought to satisfy all.

CHAPTER XIII.

Conversion of Saul of Tarsus.

There have been very many erroneous impressions made over the conversion of this man, which seems strange, since inspiration has recorded it in the New Testament; and there is not a plainer case recorded, if we gather up all that is said about him and make the second chapter of Acts the standard by which to judge the case. The conversion of the three thousand is the first case under the fully developed state of the kingdom, and is the fullest and most complete statement of conversion found on any one occasion, and should be made the standard, because the proclamation of the gospel was to begin at Jerusalem, and thence go to the ends of the earth and to the end of time. If we compare the conversion of the three thousand with the three records of the commission recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, we find them to agree perfectly, which shows that of the three thousand to be infallibly right. So when we show the conversion of Saul to harmonize exactly with these, we thereby show perfect agreement and harmony and full unity between the commission and the application of it by divine authority.

The first we find on record of the case of this very remarkable man is found in the ninth chapter of Acts. "But Saul, yet breathing threatening and

slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem." (Verses 1, 2.) Thus we find him a busy, wicked persecutor of the Lord's people. If any man needed conversion, he certainly did. He was exceedingly aggressive and bitter in his work, not only causing those that came in his way to be punished, but madly rushing off to a strange city to carry on his nefarious work. Yet he claimed to do it as a matter of religious service to God. But there is one thing about his madness a little peculiar; that is, he thought he was doing right. This fact opens the way for him to be forgiven, and gives opportunity to exhibit the delusion of the false claim of many, that whatever a man really thinks to be right, is right to him. If this principle were true in any case, it certainly would have been true with Saul of Tarsus. He says of himself: "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." (Acts 26: 9.) Again: "And Paul, looking steadfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day." (Acts 23: 1.) So he was honest, conscientious, in all this terrible work, and did what he sincerely thought he ought to do.

But the question in the matter is: Did his thinking it was right make it right? Most assuredly not; and as it was not right in him, that principle is not right with anybody now. Paul was very thankful that he had received this mercy. "Though I was

before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. 1: 13, 14.) He does not try to justify himself for a moment in the great sins of blasphemy and persecution; he only claimed that he obtained mercy because he committed those things ignorantly in unbelief. This indicates that if he had done those things with his eyes open, realizing that Jesus was the Son of God, there would have been no pardon for him; for he indicates in that same connection that, as it was, he was chief of sinners. He was so great a sinner that he regarded it a great stretch of mercy that he could be saved at all. But when, through faith and love to God, he yielded himself fully to the demands of the gospel, he was forgiven, though so great a sinner. So the case of Saul shows beyond a peradventure that a man's doing what he thinks to be right makes it right to him, is as great a mistake as shortsighted man ever made. It is an exceedingly dangerous delusion, and has doubtless blinded many to their ruin. There is not a shadow of foundation for the truth of such a position.

It is not sufficient for a man to do what he sincerely thinks is right; he must actually and earnestly do what God says do. Then he is infallibly safe. Uzza thought he was doing right to lay his hands on the ark of God to keep it from falling from the new cart. Instead, however, of its being right, he immediately died for his error. No man has any promise from God that he will be saved, except upon doing what God commands to be done.

The above is the claim made in behalf of the pious unimmersed. It is claimed they are honest in thinking that sprinkling is scriptural baptism, and they verily and honestly thought they were doing right when they were sprinkled, and that God in his mercy will save them. Let it be remembered that Saul of Tarsus was as honest as any of them, for he verily thought he ought to do many things against Christ and his followers; yet he acknowledged that he was a great sinner. None of them can claim greater honesty than Uzza. People deceive themselves when they decide they will be saved, or that their friends will be saved, because they think they were right when they did what God never ordained, and rely on him to save them. All such are risking their souls on the doctrines and commandments of men, which, Jesus says, make void the commandments of God.

But we will now look more carefully into the conversion of Saul, and see if we can ascertain when and where and how he was converted. He was converted, that is certain; and certainly we can find out how it was done. There are three records of this conversion given in Acts of Apostles, and quite a number of allusions to it in the letters of this apostle to the churches. Surely, with all this information, we can ascertain how it was effected. In the chapter from which we first quoted we find Saul securing authority from the chief priests to go to Damascus to arrest all he could find calling on the name of the Lord. "And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a

voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." (Acts 9: 3-5.) This was a very wonderful occurrence. This was not a light to enlighten his mind, but a wonderful light to his physical eyes. In another place he says this was above the brightness of the sun. It is generally supposed that this brilliant light was from the glorified body of the Son of God. On the mount of transfiguration "his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light" (Matt. 17: 2), and it may have been a similar light that shone round about Saul, only more intense.

But the question is: What did this light do for him? Did it convert him? Surely not; for when the voice spoke out to him, he did not know who it was, and inquired: "Who art thou, Lord?" If it had been some sort of converting power sent to convert him, he would have known who was there—would have known that the Lord did it; but he did not. So he asked who it was. Then the answer quickly came: "I am Jesus." These words, with the accompanying signs, thoroughly convinced Saul for the first time that Jesus was truly the Christ, the Son of the living God. He was greatly astonished and awe-stricken; but, believing it was true, he suddenly cried out: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" As he did not know who it was until this answer came, of course he did not, and could not, believe on him till this answer was given. So when the light had spent its force upon him, he was still an unbeliever, and remained an unbeliever till the voice answered: "I am Jesus."

He had all the time thought he was persecuting an impostor. Now all at once he realizes that he was persecuting the Son of God. He must have felt perfectly horrified at such a sudden, unexpected personal presence of the Lord of glory; but he so far recovered from the shock as to ask, with all the stress he could throw into it: "What shall I do, Lord?" "And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do." (Acts 22: 10.) In the Common Version this is recorded as asked by Saul (Acts 9: 6); but in the American Revised Version it is left out here, but recorded at the same point in the history in Acts 22, as above. In this chapter Paul himself is relating this exciting appearance of the Lord to him. So there is no question of its being genuine in this occurrence of it.

This was with him a momentous question. He at this moment for the first time realized his great sin in persecuting the Lord by persecuting his people. So he must have meant by this anxious question: What shall I do to get rid of, or to escape from, the penalty, the ruin that might befall me on account of these sins? He may not have understood the gospel well enough to have meant what he should do to be saved, to become a Christian, but the question he asked included that; hence, the Lord gave him an answer that covered all the ground by saying: "Enter into the city, and it shall be told thee." Hence, he was not only not saved at this point, but knew nothing as to what was necessary to be done to be saved by the gospel. It is, therefore, absurd and utterly contrary to the history in

the case to talk about Saul's having been converted by that light that caused him to fall to the earth and made him blind.

So he was led by the hand into the city—sight all gone. There he remained, blind, in deep penitence, and in the deepest anxiety and in prayer, waiting for the promised answer. Likely three more anxious days were never spent than these three days spent by Saul in Damascus waiting for that longed-for answer. He knew he had sinned greatly, and was anxious to know how relief was to come. He doubtless meditated, sorrowed much over his rash course, and prayed earnestly and anxiously for the answer to come, hoping it would bring relief. The Lord gave him time for reflection and sorrow over his wrongs, and for getting ready for a thorough reformation of his life, while he was suffering the deepest anxiety as to what disposition the Lord would make of his case.

In the meantime there was one Ananias, who was a disciple of Christ in Damascus, to whom the Lord spoke and called his attention to Saul, and said to him: "Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight." (Verses 11, 12.) But Ananias had already heard of his wicked persecutions, and how he was there armed with authority from the chief priests to bind all that should call upon the name of the Lord. But the Lord reassured him, and "said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gen-

tiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." (Verses 15, 16.)

These things removed all fear from Ananias, leaving nothing else for him to do but to go. "And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Verse 17.) We do not know much about Ananias, only that he was a disciple of Christ, and had been a man devoted to the law, as Saul had been; but he had become a Christian, and was endowed with some sort of spiritual gift that enabled him to perform miracles by laying hands on people. He was sent by the Lord to Saul for two purposes, which appear in the last verse quoted, which were that Saul might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Some tell us that none had the power to confer the Holy Spirit, save the apostles, and that, therefore, Ananias did not confer it upon Saul. We are not able to see what is gained in any way by advocating such a theory, and thus nullifying this and some other passages to maintain it. It is plain that Ananias did open the eyes of Saul in a miraculous way when he laid hands on him, and that the obstructions fell off like scales; and why the Lord could not or did not confer the Holy Spirit through Ananias just as easily as to open his eyes, we cannot see. The orders given Ananias plainly express that imparting of the Holy Spirit was to be as much the result of his going to Saul as the opening of his eyes.

This passage is so plain that Ananias conferred the Spirit upon Saul that there is nothing left to be done but to accept it or to ignore the passage altogether. We know that Saul's eyes were opened when Ananias went to him and laid hands on him. Now who is able to say that the Spirit was not conferred then? Saul began preaching at once. How was he able to begin at once to preach the things he had so long discarded as false and a delusion? He could not, without much teaching, enlightening, in some way; and we have no information that Ananias stayed with him to teach him; and, besides, he went to preaching at once after his baptism. "And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized." (Verse 18.) "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." (Acts 22: 16.)

We can now begin to determine when Saul's sins were pardoned. When Ananias approached Saul, he was then an earnest believer on Christ, and had been for three days. He was not only a believer, but he was penitent. His faith began to grow and to bear fruit; he repented sorely, and was so deeply concerned that for three days and nights he fasted, ate nothing. He had been changed from a wicked persecutor to an humble penitent in a very short time. So, when Ananias reached him, he lacked but one of the three conditions of pardon, and that was baptism. Faith, repentance, and baptism are the three conditions that were required on the day of Pentecost and that were specified in the commission. It is certain, also, that Saul was not pardoned before his baptism, for he was told to be bap-

tized and wash away his sins; so he was not pardoned, and could not be, before his baptism. While it is true that the water of baptism does not wash away sin, it is true that baptism is so closely connected with the name of Christ and his blood that people cannot form connection with these before baptism. The divine commission says: "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In Christ there is salvation; out of him there is no promise of it. Since we are baptized into Christ, then we are not in him till that is performed; so until Saul was baptized into Christ he had no promise of pardon. Yet men to-day teach that people are in Christ and are saved before baptism.

But Paul makes no such claim for himself. We will now present some things Paul as an apostle said as to where and when he and others were saved. He says of himself and the Romans: "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (Rom. 6: 3.) Paul's conversion cannot be called in question, because the Lord sent a man to tell him what to do who was himself able to perform miracles, and knew the truth, or the Lord would not have sent him. So he most certainly told him the truth, and the whole truth, so far as his duty was concerned; and, besides, Paul was himself inspired from the time of his conversion to the end of his life. So if anything had been wrong about his conversion, or out of place, he would have known it and would have corrected it; but he never did. So we are compelled to recognize his conversion as all right, and as a remarkably plain case of it. He

was ready for a full entrance into Christ when Ananias reached him. His faith and repentance had made him ready in character. He believed on the Lord; he had already turned from his wicked course in life, and was perfectly resigned to the Lord's will so far as he knew it. So when the information reached him that he must take this last step, should be baptized into Christ, he made no delay; he obeyed at once. Then in the passage just quoted he tells us plainly that he was baptized into Christ. To doubt it is to doubt the truth of the Bible, God's own revelation to men.

Then, next, as to whether he was in Christ or out of him when pardoned, we will let him settle that for us. When writing to the Ephesians and telling the relationship in which they received pardon, he puts himself with them when speaking of Christ, and says: "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1:7.) This tells us plainly that he and the Ephesians were in Christ when they received remission, and that this remission was through his blood. Hence, they had to come into Christ to reach his blood. Again, we learn from Paul: "To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses, and having committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Cor. 5:19.) So God is in Christ to reconcile and save sinners. When, therefore, we come into Christ, we reach all the power of heaven to save. We are then at once in Christ, in God, and are where the blood of Christ is. Surely this presents the matter plainly enough for all to understand it.

But how about those who claim salvation before baptism and those who accept something for baptism that God never ordained, and never submit to what God has ordained at all? If such are saved, they are saved out of Christ and of God and of the Holy Spirit, and where there is not the shadow of a promise of the benefits of the blood of Christ. They in reality have no covenant relation with God nor with Christ. They have not gone far enough in their obedience to reach such relation, and have no promise of the blessings.

None have been baptized except those that have done just what the word itself expresses; and Paul tells us plainly what that means, defining it by another word that is so explicit that none can for a moment doubt the action expressed: "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6: 4.) The word "buried" means what it says, and cannot mean anything else; but, to dodge immersion in water, many claim the passage is speaking of spiritual baptism. But, then, an insurmountable difficulty meets them on that line. The baptism called a "burial" puts people into Christ, as the preceding verse plainly expresses. Jesus settles this when he says in the commission: "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28: 19.)

This baptism was to be performed by men, by the apostles, and they could not baptize people in the Holy Spirit. Christ alone did this, and it did not put people into Christ—as, for example, the

apostles, on the day of Pentecost, who were baptized in the Spirit to inspire them for their work, not to put them into Christ. But Paul and the Romans were baptized by men into Christ, and in that same baptism they were buried, and that was in water. Ananias baptized Paul. He could baptize them in water, but not in the Holy Spirit. So he and the Romans were baptized, buried, immersed in water, "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." No man that believes the Bible can say Paul's baptism was not all right. So this passage settles what the word "baptize" means, and settles the proposition that immersion in water puts people into Christ, when by faith and repentance they are prepared for it, as Paul and the Romans were.

In this baptism there is a resurrection out of the element in which they were buried; so if this passage speaks of spiritual baptism, then they were buried in the Spirit, raised up out of it, and separated from it the rest of life. That proves so much that it spoils the whole claim that it was in the Spirit. Hence, the simple truth in the case is that Paul was immersed in water, into Christ; and all that would be saved like Paul must do as he did, for he did precisely what God requires all others to do, as did the Romans.

But the question is asked: "If Christ did not convert Saul when he appeared to him by the way, what did he appear to him for?" People that claim conversion by some direct operation instead of by obeying the gospel cling closely to Saul, and strongly insist that he was converted that way; but if those making that claim would only read all that

is said in connection with that case, they would find that Christ himself tells what he appeared to him for. Saul, in relating this appearance of the Lord to him and what he said to him, gives the following: "And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, . . . that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me." (Acts 26: 15-18.) This passage is so plain that we see not how it can be made plainer. The Savior just tells in a plain, straightforward manner that he had appeared to him to appoint him to be a minister and a witness of the things he had seen in him, and of the things in which he would appear to him; that he would send him to the Gentiles to open their eyes, or, in other words, to preach the gospel to them, that they might turn from darkness to light, that they might embrace the gospel and be saved. This was a wonderful work he placed in his hands. And Paul goes right on in the same connection and says he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; that he began in Damascus, then in Jerusalem, thence in all the country of Judea, and unto the Gentiles, preaching that they should repent and turn to God; but not one word was said about his appearing to him to convert him.

On the other hand, when he asked what he should do, he told him to go into the city and he should be told what to do. He went, was told what to do to be saved, and of the great work the Lord had for him to do; so he at once obeyed the gospel, was saved, became a Christian, and went to preaching. His later history shows what a bold, honest, earnest man, Christian, and apostle he made. The appearance of the Savior to Saul, so that he saw him in his risen and glorified state, and receiving his commission from him in person, made him a thorough and competent witness of the resurrection and glorification of the Son of God. He could then say he had seen him and had heard the voice of his mouth.

Add to this the promise of being filled with the Holy Spirit, and you have a well-equipped apostle, ready to preach the glorious gospel of Christ, which he at once began to do, and continued it to the close of his life. On the other hand, his prompt obedience to the gospel, when Ananias told him what to do, put him into Christ and made him a child of God. He tells us: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." (Rom. 8: 2.) The law of the Spirit as here mentioned is evidently the law of conversion as presented by the Spirit through Peter on the day of Pentecost, which holds good to the present time, and makes all Christians who in sincerity and truth obey it as did the three thousand and Saul of Tarsus. It is very strange that people will misapply the word of God to sustain theories and human inventions. The word of God is plain, if all were willing to accept it.

CHAPTER XIV.

Conversion of Lydia and Her Household.

The very fact that there has long been, and still is, much controversy and many erroneous opinions over this conversion makes it the more important that we study it carefully, that we may see what is really taught in it. If there was any secret operation of the Holy Spirit upon her heart at the time of her conversion, we ought to know it. So her conversion is worthy of careful examination.

Paul and Silas were at Troas, on the Ægean Sea, a convenient seaport town from which to take sail for Macedonia, just across that narrow sea. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." (Acts 16: 9.) Here is a direct, miraculous, and special call to Paul to go over into Macedonia and help them. Paul and his companion had been preaching in Asia Minor for some time, and now the Lord had work for them in Macedonia, and so notified them. It is worthy of note, also, that the Spirit had twice notified them already not to preach longer in Asia, and on this very account they had come to Troas, and were there awaiting further orders; and then this vision appeared to Paul, making it the third miraculous manifestation they had received. This last one settled the question as to

where they were to go. "And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them." (Verse 10.) This was in the days of miracles, and the Lord knew there were people in Macedonia ready to hear the gospel, and by these three miracles directed the apostle and his companions to go over there to preach. Thus the Spirit was working for the salvation of those people; but it was working upon the preachers, to send them there to preach the gospel to them, instead of going to work secretly and abstractly upon their hearts to convert them.

Now if it were God's order to send his Spirit upon people to convert them, it seems strange the Spirit did not go directly to the people to be converted, rather than across the sea for a preacher, thus requiring a sea voyage before anything could be done for the people. People that advocate this abstract spiritual influence in conversion surely forget that the gospel is the power of God to the salvation of all who believe, who obey its requirements, and that provision was made by the Son of God that the gospel should be preached in all the world and to every creature, promising: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." But there is no promise of salvation upon any sort of secret or abstract operation of the Spirit upon the hearts of sinners. Neither is there anything said about such an operation in any case of conversion on record.

These men understood, too, that they were called to go into Macedonia to preach the gospel to them. So they made the voyage across the sea, and landed

at Philippi, a city of the country where they were directed to go. "And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." (Verses 13, 14.) We are not told in this what the apostle said; we are only told that they spake to the women gathered there; but as they understood that they were called there to preach the gospel to those people, they certainly did it. They would not go there and preach something else, understanding at the same time that the Lord had called them there to preach the gospel. The result of the preaching also shows conclusively that they did preach the gospel. "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." (Verse 15.) This is the amount of the information we have on this subject. By what is said we must determine what was preached, and what this woman and her household did.

It is certainly plain enough, if we study it in the light of passages in which the subject of conversion is more fully presented. First, they were called there to preach the gospel. We know that Paul knew how to preach the gospel; for he was called, qualified, and sent out to preach it, and had been preaching for years under the inspiration of the

Holy Spirit. Paul himself tells us what the gospel facts are, which are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. His great theme was to preach Christ, and him crucified. There can be no doubt that he fully preached these things at Philippi. The circumstances, including the three direct miracles that led him to that place, were such as to lead him to preach everything the gospel involves in the matter of conversion, and he was faithful in doing the work. So the preaching he did was all involved in the command to "preach the gospel."

In the next place, what did Lydia do in accepting it? There are two words in the above statement that need to be studied with care. These are in the expression, "whose heart the Lord opened." The word "heart" must be studied in the light of the New Testament. That is our only guidance in these matters. We can learn the general meaning of the word "heart" by the uses made of it. When Jesus had said to the man sick of the palsy at Capernaum, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," the scribes present said that he blasphemed; but "Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matt. 9: 4.) This shows without any doubt that Jesus used the word "heart" in the sense of the mind, the faculty with which one reasons, to consider, to revolve anything in the mind, to reach conclusions. The heart, the mind, has many affections—as love, hatred, and such like; but in this passage it means the mind, the thinking power of man.

In connection with the parable of the sower, Jesus quotes from Isaiah the following, and applies it to the unbelieving Jews of his day: "For this peo-

ple's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again, and I should heal them." (Matt. 13: 15.) These people had closed their eyes and ears against the truth; their hearts were corrupt; and on this account they were not healed—not healed, saved, because they did not understand with their heart, the mind; for that is the faculty, the power in man to understand things.

No one can be intelligently converted to anything without understanding it. In the matter of conversion people must understand, so as to make the right turn; for conversion is turning from Satan to God, that they may serve God. They have to learn what this turning is, and how to make it, for they cannot be forgiven till they make this turn. So it is plain that the word "heart" here means the mind, the faculty that understands. Once more: "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4: 12.) These passages and many others of like import show clearly that the heart is the mind, that which exercises thought and forms intentions.

Next, the word "opened" must be considered. This word, used in connection with the word "heart," means to teach, to enlighten, to impart instruction or information. The Greek word "dia-noigo" is used eight times in the New Testament. It is used both literally and figuratively. Literally,

to open the eyes, or doors; figuratively, to open the heart, mind, by imparting light; instruction, which is plainly the meaning of it in the passage concerning Lydia's conversion, whose heart, mind, the Lord enlightened, instructed.

In the next place, how did the Lord open, enlighten, instruct, Lydia's heart? Did he do it by some secret, immediate, or direct power, without means, agencies, or instrumentalities? God has never worked that way in converting people. There is not one single case on record where any human being was converted that way. Direct miraculous power was exerted in connection with conversion in many cases in apostolic times; but these miracles were wrought for other purposes, never to convert sinners. The gospel is the power of God to convert and save men, and he uses no other. In the days of miracles that sort of power was frequently used to get the gospel to people, so they could hear and obey it; so it was in this case. The miracles were performed to get the gospel to Philippi, where Lydia was; but when Paul reached the place where she was, he did the preaching, and she heard and obeyed. Paul was the right man in the right place. He was called and made an apostle, was qualified by the Holy Spirit to do the very work that was done for Lydia. He was to open the eyes of people, to turn them from darkness to light, that they might turn from the power of Satan to God and be saved. This is just what was done for Lydia and her household.

But how could he do such a work as this? In and of himself he could not; but he was an agent of the Lord, sent out by him to do this work in

his name, by his authority, and he sent him to this particular place for that very purpose. Hence, it was the Lord's work, done by the Holy Spirit through Paul as his agent. Can any one doubt the sufficiency and power of such agencies? As well doubt the power of God himself to save as to doubt the agencies he appointed for the accomplishment of these ends. If God cannot save people that way, then how can he save them?

I know the gospel plan of salvation is discounted and made void in many ways by the doctrines and devices of men, since so many are ready to receive what men say, instead of receiving and doing what God says. This does not destroy the gospel, which is God's power to save; but such substitutes defraud men of the power of the gospel to save them. Men may get up all the inventions and devices they please, yet the gospel will still be the power of God to save all who obey it, and to condemn all who disobey it. Yes, there was power enough there to convert Lydia and her household when Paul went and preached the gospel to them. He promises that those who believe and obey the gospel shall be saved. Has any man the right to say such will not be saved? Yet hundreds of men who claim to be ministers of Christ leave out conditions of salvation as specified by the Holy Spirit through the apostles, and thrust upon the people conditions unknown in New Testament times. Why not preach just what they find in the preaching of the apostles, and trust in the promises and power of God to save? There is power in God, Christ, and the gospel to save, but no power in man's opinions and inventions to save. Paul says: "Seeing that Jews ask for signs,

and Greeks seek after wisdom : but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness ; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1: 22-24.) Paul means by this passage that when the gospel was preached to the Jews, they rejected it, asking for signs ; that the Greeks counted it but foolishness ; but to those that were called and obeyed, Christ was the power and wisdom of God. 'The power and wisdom of God to save a ruined world are concentrated in the gospel ; and, besides, there is no power anywhere or in anything else beneath the sun to save souls. Surely it is something awful to reject the power and wisdom of God to save sinners, and introduce things of man's wisdom instead !

"Christ, and him crucified." What a gracious message ! The true love, wisdom, and power of God are in that message. The full and complete obedience of Christ unto death is in it. The blood of Christ is in it, the blood of the everlasting covenant. The power and wisdom of God are in every condition of salvation given by the Holy Spirit through the apostles. To reject any one of these conditions that are given in the gospel plan of salvation is to reject God, Christ, and the Spirit of God ; it is to reject the power and wisdom of all heaven combined. Why will men thus trifle with divine power and wisdom so far as to lay them aside and present the doctrines of men—such as abstract spiritual influence, justification by faith only, that baptism is a nonessential, that the Lord's Supper every Lord's day is not essential to the Chris-

tian life, and such like—thus upsetting and changing God's ways and substituting man's ways?

Concerning these matters, Paul says, again: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (Verses 30, 31.) Even in the days of the apostles men were discounting the wisdom and power of God as manifested in the gospel of Christ as inadequate to save the soul, and rejecting them as weak, foolish, and insufficient and powerless to save; and the apostles had to combat them as we also do now. They also have furnished us with the very sort of arguments and information we need to-day against such things. It is still true that the things that God in his divine wisdom has chosen as the very things to save the world are the very things that are to-day counted foolishness by many. So that we are well fortified along these lines, if we will but avail ourselves of them.

Now, with the testimony we have regarding the power, wisdom, and sufficiency in the gospel to save, we study Lydia again. She was abundantly blessed in having Paul there to preach the gospel to her in all its plainness, wisdom, and power, and to tell her precisely how she could be saved by it. We may readily know what Paul told her to do to be saved. We know what was preached to the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; also that the same things preached there were to go to the ends of the earth, and to the end of the new and everlasting covenant. We know the gospel in its facts was preached there—Christ, and him cruci-

fied, and raised again from the dead; that on that day the people were required to believe, to repent, and to be baptized. The goodness of God as portrayed in the gospel moved about three thousand of those people to obey that day.

Paul, without any sort of doubt, preached all these things to Lydia. Did she do them all? She certainly did. We know she and her household were baptized, because the record tells us so. Was this all she did? Certainly not; for baptism alone will not put people into Christ, and, therefore, cannot save. So if that was all she did, she was not saved. But by the preaching of Paul her heart was so enlightened that she was moved to attend, "to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." "The things." Paul told her more than one thing—baptism; and as faith and repentance have to precede baptism, as shown on Pentecost, Paul preached these, and she had to do them to prepare her for baptism. An inspired man like Paul would not have gone there by specific direction of the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel to those people, and then been so negligent as to leave out faith and repentance. Either one of these left out, and baptism could avail nothing. "He that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16: 16.) "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish." (Luke 13: 3, 5.) Paul, therefore, preached both these things, and Lydia obeyed them. So he preached all that sinners are required to do, and she gladly obeyed them, as she could not get to baptism without both faith and repentance, and could not reach salvation without doing all three of them.

But are these things, when done, involved in the

wisdom and power of God to save? Who will say they are not? The gospel without these is powerless to save sinners. With these obeyed, all the power, wisdom, and authority of heaven are with them to save. These are God's appointments, and will prove effectual to all that obey them. It is very strange that any one should ever for a moment think of being saved on anything less than these, or should think of adding anything more than these.

When God in his wisdom and goodness has appointed these things, and has promised to save all that do them, why should man think to change them? "Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1 Cor. 1: 25.) And, moreover, if we are saved at all, we must, of necessity, be saved by the Lord, for it is perfectly certain we cannot save ourselves. These things being true, and all know they are, why should any mortal of earth ever think of anything but to earnestly seek and accept the Lord's way? For, after all, it is the only way by which any one can be saved. If we do not accept the Lord's way, we shall be forever lost, and no one to blame but ourselves.

When the Lord, through his prophet, told the Syrian leper what to do to be cured, to be cleansed, healed, entirely freed from that terrible disease, it was so different from what he expected and seemed so ridiculous to him that he was insulted and turned to go back; but, by the persuasion of his servants, he cooled down, took a more sensible view of the matter, and went and did precisely what the Lord said do, which was to go and dip himself seven times in the river Jordan. In doing this, he had

to depend entirely upon the Lord for the healing. He had doubtless bathed often enough to know that neither the water nor the act of putting himself into it would heal leprosy. He was well satisfied that if he was cured by doing that, it would be the power of God that did the healing. So he worked up faith enough to take the required steps. He did it, and was thoroughly healed, and attributed the healing to God. So he went back to the prophet and said to him: "Behold now, I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel." (2 Kings 5: 15.) Naaman was so gratified over his healing that he begged the prophet to receive a present at his hand, which the prophet declined.

There was not a doubt in Naaman's mind as to how the healing was done. God did it, and he realized it; and whenever people do precisely what God says do, both in conversion and in living the Christian life, and are saved in heaven, they will know that the saving power was in God, who devised the plan; they will give all the glory to him, and will want to praise God and Christ for their salvation while the endless ages endure. Doing what God commands only prepares us, gives us a character fitted for God to save, and we can only consider ourselves as unprofitable servants, having only done that which was our duty to do.

CHAPTER XV.

The Christian Life.

Strictly speaking, the Christian life does not begin until one has become a Christian. Obedience to the gospel begins with faith, and then involves repentance and baptism before one can claim that he is in Christ; and until in Christ, no one can claim remission of sins, because the Bible teaches us that it is in him, not out of him, that "we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins." (Col. 1: 14.) And a man can hardly claim that he is a Christian until he can scripturally claim remission of sins. No one is recognized as a new creature until in Christ. The word of God says: "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." We could hardly say any one is a Christian until he has submitted to the above-named requirements, or claim he is in Christ—that his past sins are forgiven, that he is a new creature in a new relationship toward God, Christ, the church, the children of God. It is plain the children of Israel were not free from their old enemies till they had passed through the Red Sea, had been "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." So people now are not free from sin till baptized into Christ; then they are ready to begin their journey in earnest toward the promised land.

Hence, the gospel comes to us in two grand lessons—first, to teach us how to become Christians, and, secondly, how to live the Christian life. This is plainly indicated in the commission of Christ as recorded by Matthew. Jesus said to the apostles: “Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.” (Matt. 28: 19, 20.) First, they were to make disciples, Christians, out of the people, and then to teach the Christians how to live as Christians, as children of God. These two lessons differ in some important particulars. While the principle of obedience to what God says in both cases is the same, the things to be done are in most respects very different; which, however, we will not point out here. “Teaching them [the Christians] to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.” As they brought people into the church, they were to teach them to go right on in the service of God.

When, on the day of Pentecost, about three thousand became Christians, the very next verse says: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.” So the apostles began teaching the second lesson as soon as they embraced the first; and the beauty in the case is, they went right on in the practice of it. They (the Christians) continued in the teaching of the apostles, who had but recently been baptized in the Holy Spirit, so that they were fully qualified to teach them just what the Lord intended should be taught. The Holy Spirit that had come so miraculously upon them was to bring

to their remembrance all the Savior had said to them, and was to guide them into all else they needed to teach. So we may be fully assured that what the apostles taught was the word of God in its purity, and we may fully rely upon it as such.

They taught those disciples all they needed to know and do. They left nothing for them, nor for those in any after ages, to legislate upon to perfect the church; so that those who do such a thing lay violent and unlawful hands upon the word of God. His word as he gave it is perfect; but every man that makes any change upon it, adds anything to it or takes anything from it, makes it imperfect, and in so doing renders himself liable to the terrible judgment pronounced in the word of God against those that do such things.

The church that Christ built has been so changed and mutilated by a very large part of the religious world that there is scarcely a resemblance left between the original body of Christ, as established by the Holy Spirit, and modern churches of human wisdom. The first church, at Jerusalem, was started by divine wisdom, and was, therefore, started right, just as every congregation on earth from then till now and to the end of time should be started. Denominational churches have all been built by men—uninspired men, at that; built by human wisdom, not divine. For some time there was but one church on earth, the church of Christ and of God. Now there are churches many, and with many names, all differing both in names and practice from the one church of the New Testament.

There is not a denomination on earth that accepts the church of the New Testament in name

and in practice. The Spirit of God, through the apostles, built up the New Testament church; but theologians have built up denominational churches, have framed their creeds, disciplines, articles of faith, manner of government, and such like. This accounts for the wonderful difference between them and the church which the Holy Spirit built up, and to which He gave its name, its manner of government and discipline.

Those who belong to this church and are loyal to Christ are satisfied to be simply Christians; to do and be just what the Holy Spirit teaches them to do and be; to do all in the service of God as the Holy Spirit directs, and trust God for the blessings. They will always want to carry on both the work and worship of the church just as they read it from the New Testament. They never want to fail to follow the teaching of the apostles, either in the conversion of sinners or the edification of the church. If all professed Christians were willing to do this, there would be but one church on the earth to-day, for they would then take the New Testament and go by it in the work and worship of the church. This is just what Jesus prayed for, and what all the loyal and faithful servants of God are working and praying for to-day.

But in the passage last quoted (Acts 2: 42), the disciples at Jerusalem continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles; and that means they steadfastly observed, obeyed, the teaching of the Holy Spirit, for the apostles spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. The first item of this teaching as mentioned was "fellowship." This word has rather a broad sweep in its meaning. In its broad sense it

means mutual participation—that they all took part in whatever the word may be applied to. If it be applied to love, either love to God or to brotherly love, it means they all partook alike, and were, therefore, in unity in the matter; there was no division among them. But it is pretty generally understood that in this passage it means the contribution of their earthly means for the advancement of the cause of God on earth. If that is correct, it means they all bore a part in it. It is a fact that the word is a number of times used in that sense in the Scriptures. There were many special contributions made in the days of the apostles—some for the destitute and some for the apostles in their work, especially for Paul. Then, also, the regular contribution on the first day of the week. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.” (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.) This collection for the saints was likely for the suffering saints at Jerusalem; but it was to be made on the first day of the week. This indicates a regular custom among the churches to contribute on the first day of the week, as it was required that all should meet on that day to worship.

The disciples at Troas met thus. “And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.” (Acts 20: 7.) This passage shows a regular custom of meeting on the first day of every week to break bread, since the

inspired Paul met with them and recognized it as of divine appointment. He had tarried there several days, presumably to meet the brethren on the first day, knowing they would come together on that day to worship.

In consideration of this regular appointment of the Lord for all his people to meet on the first day of the week, Paul gave these special instructions to the churches of Galatia and the church at Corinth to make their contributions on that day. The Greek of this passage justifies the idea of treasuring their contributions—that is, putting them into the treasury. Some contend that they were to save it up at home. This cannot be the meaning, since that would not have accomplished what Paul wanted. He wanted the contributions of all the churches to which he had written to be put together, so they would not have to be gathered when he should call for it. If they all, individually, had laid up their contributions at home, then the very thing he wanted to avoid would have met him, and each individual would have had to be seen at home in order to get it; but if they put it in the treasury of each congregation, then the very thing Paul desired was accomplished. So, from the very beginning of the existence of the church, Christians were taught to contribute on the first day of the week; and the church at Jerusalem certainly did contribute liberally until they were scattered by persecution, and likely were broken up; then the churches elsewhere began to help them. This matter of contribution was part of the work of living the Christian life, and all Christians ought to carefully practice it.

This was part of the apostles' teaching, and they taught as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The next item in the service of the church at Jerusalem is that they also continued "in the breaking of bread." This is a very important item in the service of the church. When the Savior instituted it, he said: "This do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22: 19.) This expression from Jesus is twice repeated by Paul. (1 Cor. 11: 24, 25.) The Lord's Supper is no mere matter of form. It is a memorial institution, and a most impressive form of spiritual food upon which Christians are to feed on the first day of the week.

The Lord's Supper was instituted under most solemn circumstances. It was the same night in which the Savior was betrayed, when he realized that he was at the very door of death—and a very terrible death, at that. He was nailed to the cross, and thus suffered the torture of a slow and horrible death—not on his own account, but to provide salvation for a wicked world. He knew that such a memorial was needful for his followers, and that all who love him would delight in having such a memorial. The death of Christ was the most important event that ever occurred on this earth, and fraught with the greatest blessings to man. It was an event well calculated to fill the soul of every child of God with love and admiration for such a sacrifice, and to draw them closer to Him who has done so much for them, and to be a continued feast of soul to them. Not to take an interest in such an ordinance would indicate sordid indifference and ingratitude, both toward Him who so loved the world as to send his own beloved Son into it to

die for sinners, and toward Him who thus suffered to redeem them from eternal woe. It should be at once the most soul-stirring and enjoyable feast to the children of God they ever attend on this earth. It should be a source of spiritual strength and comfort to the people of God that will ever keep them full of interest in the cause of Him who has done so much for them. How any one can meet with saints the first day of every week, take the Lord's Supper, and remember the thrilling scenes of the cross, and not keep his love for God and for Christ continually growing and the inner man continually strengthening, is hard to conceive.

On the other hand, how unaccountably strange that any one can attend this feast regularly, and at the same time so lose his interest in Christ and his service as to go back to the world again and give up the precious love of heaven! In fact, those that turn back into the world never took much interest in the Son of God and his great sufferings for us, nor in the love of Him who devised it all. Surely those who turn back only attended as a mere form, and never drank in the spirit of it, and never took any interest in what Christ has done for them, nor in the salvation of their own souls.

How strange it is that so many religious people meet together the first day of every week and do not partake of the Lord's Supper at all—only pretend to partake of it twice or four times a year! This custom is brought about by following men more than Christ. If these churches would follow the teaching of the apostles, as did the church at Jerusalem, there would be a wonderful revolution among them. There would then be perfect unity

among all that would do that. The beauty of it then would be that they would all be following the teaching of the Holy Spirit. This is the way it started in the first church established on earth, and all churches since are required to live the same way. This is the authority of God. Those who do otherwise, follow men.

Most of the denominations, especially in the cities, meet together regularly on the first day of the week, but only take the Supper occasionally. Generally they meet to hear preaching; and when that is over, they disperse and go home. This order of things is not from God. We have in Paul the example of an inspired man preaching in connection with taking the Supper. But it is plainly stated that they came together to break bread, and the preaching was only an incident, as Paul chanced to be at Troas, and remained over Lord's day, and met and worshiped with them and preached to them. This incident shows that preaching is all right, provided the Lord's Supper is not left off; but when preaching takes the place of the Supper, and it is set aside, God's authority is set aside and man's wisdom substituted. None can worship God in spirit and in truth on the first day of the week and set aside the Lord's Supper. To worship in spirit and in truth is to worship as the Spirit of God teaches in its word, which is truth. The Lord's Supper is required by the truth, and all who habitually and deliberately leave it out of the service reject the word of truth which demands it.

Also, those Christians who do not meet to take the Lord's Supper, except when there is to be preaching, reject God and Christ and the Holy

Spirit in this matter. Christians are to meet together on that day and attend to this ordinance in order to worship as the Lord requires, and nothing else can take its place. Preaching cannot take its place. If we can have it in connection with the Supper, that is all right. It is both interesting and profitable to hear the word of the Lord on that day, or any other day; but we must not allow that or anything else to crowd out anything so sublimely important as this divinely appointed ordinance.

Another item in the apostles' teaching, and in which the saints at Jerusalem continued, is prayer. This is something that Christians should never neglect. In the first place, it is an item that cannot be left off without disregarding the word of God. In the next place, the child of God so much needs the benefits and help of prayer that he cannot afford to deprive himself of this help. Even Jesus, the Son of God, prayed much and often; sometimes continued the livelong night in earnest, devotional prayer to his Father. If he so much needed to pray, surely the weak and blundering children of God, in their shortsighted and dependent condition, need it much more. He it was that gave the following on it: "And he spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke 18: 1.) He had been addressing his disciples all through the preceding chapter, and to them he said that they ought always to pray.

But it was not for them alone that he said this. It was for us who live in the twentieth century as well. He put his followers under obligations when he says they ought to pray always, and not to faint. If we cease or fail to do what he says, we cease

to follow him, and come dangerously near ceasing to be his disciples and forfeiting his promises. It is very dangerous for the children of God to neglect anything their Lord and Master says to them.

The Revised Version is different from the Common Version as to the class of persons put under obligations to pray. The Common Version has it "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint." This puts it in a broad, indefinite sort of way that makes it easy to pervert. But the revised Greek text puts in the pronoun "they," which shows he was simply telling his disciples that they ought always to pray. So the late revisers had authority for putting "they;" while those who translated the Authorized Version failed to indicate the real meaning, even by the context. The connection fully shows he was talking to his disciples when he gave the parable. The revised version of this passage is certainly right. If any, therefore, want to put men of the world that have never obeyed the gospel under obligations to always pray, they will have to find some other passage to express it, for this does not. This puts the obligation upon his servants, the disciples. The servants of God have been the praying ones in all the dispensations, and they are yet.

There is no one kind of obligation more solemnly impressed in the New Testament than prayer. Jesus gave the example, and also enjoined it upon his disciples, and gave them a form of prayer. The apostles often emphasize it. Paul put it in close connection with the Christian armor. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and sup-

plication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and on my behalf, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel." (Eph. 6: 17-19.) This is in perfect harmony with what the Lord himself said about prayer. This letter was written to Christians, and teaches them to pray always; and to pray, make supplication for all saints, and to pray for him, that he might have full boldness in preaching the gospel.

This is a beautiful, strong, and impressive passage on the subject of prayer. Paul, like Christ, prayed much. He told many congregations how earnestly he prayed for them. He was truly a man of prayer. While all these things were written nearly two thousand years ago, the teaching is as much for Christians now as it was for those to whom they were spoken and written then. It is vain, therefore, for any child of God to think he can be a faithful Christian and not pray regularly. Prayer is so intimately connected with the Christian life that no one can fill the requirements of the New Testament without it.

In the first place, it is a Christian duty, being so often required. In the next place, it is a wonderful privilege that children of God, though weak and imperfect, should be permitted to make so near an approach unto God as to call him "Our Father," and commune with him, thank and praise him for his great mercy to us, and pray to him daily for the things we so much need; and, besides, it helps us and strengthens us in the discharge of our duties, and makes us better in heart and life by this sort of

daily communion with our Heavenly Father, and helps us to live closer to him. It also greatly encourages and helps the Christian that God has promised to hear and answer the prayers of his faithful children. No one can fully estimate the comfort, consolation, and encouragement a faithful child of God derives through prayer.

An earnest, faithful child of God does not need telling to induce him to pray. He wants to pray, and could not be kept from it. He wants to pray, in the first place, because God wants him to. It is always a great pleasure to such to do just what the Lord requires. In the next place, he loves to pray because he derives so much comfort and blessing from it. But if there is nothing in it for this life, only that God wants us to pray, that is enough to move every heart that loves God to pray to him. But the Bible is full of examples, promises, and assurances that untold blessings have come, and will still come, to the righteous when they pray in this life. Here on earth, in the midst of all its trials and temptations, is where we especially need the benefits of prayer.

Christ and the apostles have taught it abundantly throughout the New Testament. Christ said to his disciples: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matt. 26: 41.) Jesus himself went out three times alone and prayed most earnestly and touchingly to his Father just before his betrayal and arrest. All through his ministry he prayed abundantly, all of which was a grand example for us, and we are told we should follow his steps. Paul and Silas prayed in the prison at Philippi at

the hour of midnight. An earthquake occurred that opened the prison doors, which afforded an opportunity for Paul to preach the gospel to the jailer and his house, which resulted in their conversion. "the same hour of the night."

Prayer has in all the ages been an important factor in the lives of the children of God, especially through the Jewish and Christian ages. There is, in fact, an enormous amount of testimony, both by precept and by example, in the Bible on the subject of prayer, and many wonderful things accomplished through prayer. Every earnest Christian, posted in the word of God on the subject, and with strong faith in the word of God, will be a man of prayer, and all the world cannot keep him from it, unless they take his life away.

A strong and faithful Christian that does not pray would be an anomaly, a freak. In reality, there are none such. A faithful Christian loves Jesus, and he says: "If a man love me, he will keep my word." Jesus told us to pray; he said it again and again, and gave the example in his own life. Paul says: "I desire therefore that the men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and disputing." (1 Tim. 2: 8.) This will take in public prayers and private prayers—prayers everywhere. He uses the word "men" in contrast with the women of the church—not men of the world, but Christians—for men of the world cannot lift up holy hands; only Christians can do that. Hence, it is the children of God that are spoken of here.

But we need not multiply passages along this line in this chapter. These are enough. Shall we, then, do as God our Father, our Lord and Savior Jesus

Christ, and the Holy Spirit all demand of us? Will we not pray without ceasing? It is true, also, that, to be benefited by prayer, we must live in harmony with God's will. It is not the mere fact of praying that brings the blessings of God to us; we must be faithful in all of his will. He promises no blessing to those in rebellion against him.

What a grand thing it is to be in harmony with God's will! Think of Elijah, of his faithful life, his earnest prayers, the three and a half years of famine, the abundant rain, all in answer to his prayers; and, finally, how he was carried to heaven by a whirlwind, in a chariot of fire! How glorious the ending of such a life! Think of the beautiful life of Jesus, his earnest prayers, the crown of thorns, the cross, the grave, the triumphant resurrection, his ascension, the eternal crown of glory! Then think how he has promised to come again to take his faithful ones home to live in the place prepared for all the righteous forever and ever. All these blessings are within our reach, if we will but love and serve him here. The Lord bless and help us all so to do.

CHAPTER XVI.

Other Items in the Christian Life.

In the Greek Testament the word for "Christ" is "Christos." The word for "Christian" is "Christianos," and means, literally, "a follower of Christ." In the New Testament it is not applied to any except those that had obeyed the first principles of the gospel, had entered into the church of Christ, and were recognized as having their past sins forgiven. The word is applied directly to these in but two places in the New Testament, in the first of which it is said: "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." (Acts 11: 26.) Also: "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (1 Pet. 4: 16.) In another place: "And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." (Acts 26: 28.) But Agrippa never became a Christian, so far as we know.

In the first occurrence of this word, on which occasion the disciples were "called Christians first in Antioch," it is pretty generally understood that the name "Christian" was given by Paul and Barnabas, who had been with that church for a year, and the Greek of the passage bears out that idea; and, besides, the word rendered "were called" itself often indicates that the thing the word expresses was done by divine authority. The word is

“chreematidzo,” and is found ten times in the Greek Testament. In nearly every case it refers to some message given by the Lord; and, besides, the name “Christian,” as given to the disciples, expresses just what the servants of the Lord are required to do—that is, to follow Christ. The enemies of Christ never give names that express just what his people are required to do and to be. So we think the claim that the enemies of Christ gave the name “Christian” to his disciples is a mistake.

To be a follower of Christ is to do his will, to observe the teaching given by his apostles. No one can scripturally claim to be a follower of Christ unless he is striving all the time to observe the practical teachings and requirements of the New Testament. To be moral in a general way, and even to be charitable, does not prove that such a one is a Christian. Paul said, though he gave all his goods to feed the poor, and though he gave his body to be burned, if he did not possess love, he was nothing; and he meant the kind of love for Christ that would lead him to do what the word of Christ requires. One or two good things are not enough to prove any one a Christian. It takes an earnest, honest effort to do all that he bids us do. That is just what the word, the name “Christian,” signifies. Though one obeys the gospel so far as to obtain remission of past sins, and does not continue to follow Christ, he ceases to be a Christian, ceases to be a follower of Christ. It should be a matter of serious consideration to every one claiming to be a Christian as to whether he is really following him in his divine appointments.

There are many that have never obeyed Christ in

baptism—that is, have not been immersed, buried with Christ in baptism, and who do not observe the Lord's Supper as Christ requires, do not wear the name of Christ, and are governed as churches by creeds and confessions of faith, rather than by the word of the Lord. Many of these may be moral and charitable, but are not followers of Christ, and have not a scriptural right to the name "Christian." We must take the word of God and of Christ, learn what it requires at our hands, and must be doers of the word, and not hearers only, to be entitled to wear the name "Christian."

We showed in Chapter XV. how the disciples were started to attend to the public services of the church, and desire in this to look after matters of everyday life, at home, among our neighbors, and wherever our lots may be cast.

Peter said to those who had but recently become Christians: "Putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." (1 Pet. 2: 1, 2.) In Christianity, as well as in the flesh, there is childhood and growth. The fleshly growth is a good illustration of the spiritual. Spiritual food is as essential to growth in spiritual life as natural food is to produce fleshly growth. Everybody understands that a child will not, and cannot, grow without food. It must not only have food, but the food must be suited to the fleshly nature and growth of the one whose growth is desired. The best, the most nourishing food for a newborn babe is its mother's milk. This is a divine provision of nature

for physical growth and development, and is precisely adapted to that end. As the child grows stronger, it can take stronger food. Strong meat can be taken and digested when manhood has been attained. So the babe in Christ needs the simple, plain teaching of the word of God, such as it can understand and appropriate to its growth and advancement. In the Common Version this is called "the sincere milk of the word." Without this kind of food, and it digested, there can be no spiritual growth.

Peter says, as it stands in the old version, "desire" this food; in the new, "long for" it. The word "long" is a very strong term. The little child longs for the food provided for it, and the Christian must long for the food the Lord has provided for his growth. Nothing but the word of the Lord can produce a growth unto salvation. A fleshly desire—such as the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"—will quickly bring spiritual death, but not life. Religious errors, the doctrines and commandments of men, cannot produce spiritual growth. As well feed the babe on calomel to produce growth in the flesh as to feed a young Christian on the doctrines and opinions of men in order to produce spiritual growth. As surely as that things poisonous to the flesh will produce physical death, so surely will the doctrines and opinions of men, taken and appropriated by Christians, produce spiritual death. This matter of longing for the word of God is very much like the language of Jesus when he said: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matt. 5: 6.) When people are

hungering for literal food, they hunt for it, and never rest contented till they find it and their hunger is satisfied. So when Christians long for the word of God, they never stop seeking till they find it. It takes the light of truth to satisfy the longing, hungry soul. That is what he wants, what he needs. He does not hunger after human opinions, does not want them; for they cannot satisfy, cannot lead to salvation. The Christian wants salvation, eternal life, and wants the light that will lead him there; and nothing but the word of God, the word of life, can lead to it.

Unfortunately, only a few Christians are longing, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, or they would be more anxious for a knowledge of the word of God, which is the only thing that can lead to it. To be a Christian and live the life required is the grandest thing any man ever did do. It is, indeed, the only thing in the reach of man that will make him pure and holy and good in the sight of the Lord. Above all things, then, let the Christian study the word of God, that he may know what the Lord would have him do, and then do it with his might.

There are also many things the Christian has to lay aside in order to love and long for the word of God. Hence, Peter, in the passage quoted, says to put away wickedness, guile, hypocrisy. In a word, lay aside, put down, and keep down every desire, every habit and wish, no matter how dear to the flesh, that will be in the way of the pure life that Jesus requires us to live. Paul also says: "Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire,

and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Col. 3: 5.) The only way to successfully put these fleshly passions and propensities to death and keep them down is to so long for the word of God as to study it and treasure it in our hearts, and thus crowd out these fleshly inclinations, and so fill our souls with the good things we are required to do that we will not want to do evil things. No man can cultivate the pure love of God in his heart, and at the same time cultivate a love and desire for the evil things the word of the Lord requires us to put to death. The very next verse shows the utter ruin that the practice of the things we are commanded to put down will bring: "For which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." Just to the extent, therefore, that we value the salvation of our souls, must we heed and practice the word of God regarding these things. We must love God and his truth more than we love the indulgence of these evil tendencies, or we may give up all idea of eternal life.

It is only longing for and practicing what the word of God requires that will enable us to grow unto eternal life. It is just as certain that those who indulge the flesh with its affections and lusts through this life will be lost as that the faithful servants of God will be eternally saved; but those who fill up their hearts and affections with the love of God and the practice of his truth can easily enough hold the flesh in check. Paul, in the same chapter, further says to put away, put down, "anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth." So there are very many things that we have to overcome, crucify, and keep down. For

the heart, the inner man, to do all these things, to keep all these fleshly propensities under, much spiritual food is needed in order to accomplish an end so difficult, and yet so grand and important.

Hence, the Lord, in his goodness and mercy, has prepared and plainly revealed to us in his word everything that we need in this great conflict. He provided the help for us that will furnish us with all the strength we need, if we will utilize what has been provided. So in the same chapter Paul says, again: "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." (Verses 12-14.) This is a wonderful catalogue of good things the Christian must put on if he would win in the great conflict with "the world, the flesh, and the devil." The fight is on, and no truce can be made without loss to the child of God and heir of glory. Just think of it! A heart of compassion, kindness, and all these heavenly traits of character, capped off with love, the great power that has been moving millions into the service of God for nearly two thousand years, and holding them in that service till death should come and take them to a better and happier home.

Jesus came into the world clothed in human flesh, with its weaknesses and impulses, and conquered, overcame them, and kept them under, and lived a pure and beautiful life as an example for us, and we are told to follow his steps; and if we put on,

cultivate in our hearts, the above loving principles, we can so far follow his steps as to reach the goal. This is the way, and the only way, to grow into salvation, eternal life. Living upon these principles will prepare us for eternal life, and the Lord will be certain to give it to all that get ready to enjoy it. What a wonderful amount of forbearance and long-suffering the Savior manifested toward the cruel people that treated him so wickedly when he was making ready to bestow such untold blessings upon the human race! Shall we look at all this and not learn to imitate him in these lovely traits of character? "Must Jesus bear the cross alone, and all the world go free?" No, indeed! There is a cross for every one, and we must all bear the cross if we would wear the crown. Jesus has been wearing a crown of glory ever since he finished bearing the cross and completed the work he came to do, and went back to the Father's home. Let us ever cultivate that love for God, for Christ, and for the truth, that will keep us close to the Lord, and make ourselves constantly worthy of all the promises God has made to the faithful.

The apostle also gives a further lesson in this same grand chapter, following the last passage we quoted: "And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Verses 15-17.)

In this passage are given vital principles of the Christian life. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." Peace is one of the ruling principles of Christianity, and must be a ruling principle in the heart of every child of God on earth. The religion of Christ is addressed to the heart, and is intended to fill and control the heart, and, through the heart, to control the life, and bring the whole man under the control of Christ, who is the great Head of the church. This is the sanctification that is taught in the New Testament. All are sanctified that so fill their hearts with the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament that they practice this teaching in their daily lives. "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12: 14.) To follow peace is to practice, to live out, the principles of peace that are taught in the word of God. To follow sanctification is to learn and practice the principles of holiness, of sanctification, taught us in the words of the Holy Spirit.

It is not a mystical power worked in the heart by a secret, mystical operation of the Spirit, as some claim; but, on the other hand, we are positively commanded to follow it, learn and practice it, just precisely as we are to learn and practice peace by living the principles taught us; and if we do not earnestly and faithfully follow peace and sanctification, we are plainly told we shall not see God.

Again, Paul says: "So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." (Rom. 14: 19.) Again, Paul puts down peace as one of the fruits of the Spirit, which fruit is borne by learning and prac-

ting the things the Holy Spirit teaches. Sanctification is attained precisely the same way. Again: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." This is an exceedingly important matter. Our only spiritual light is what we get through the word of the Lord; and our only way to get that is to read it or hear it read, study it, treasure it in the heart, walk in it, practice its teaching in our lives. The word of Christ dwells in us to no effect unless we live by day and by night as it directs. All that do this are continually exerting an influence for good and helping to bring others into the fold of Christ. There is but one way to secure the promise of eternal life, and that is by doing God's will; and there is but one chance of doing that will, and that is that we learn it and understand it. Hence the propriety and importance of the command to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. There is no excuse in this Bible land to be ignorant of the will of God. If any cannot read themselves, they can get others to read for them, and hear the word preached, and thus secure a knowledge of what the Lord would have them do. If any are ignorant of their duty, it is their own fault, because they do not try to learn it.

The same passage also requires that everything we say and everything we do in the service of God shall be said and done in the name of Christ, which means by his authority. To do and say things by the authority of Christ is to do and say what we find on record in the word which he has furnished us. Any man, therefore, that teaches people to do as service to God anything not found in his word is guilty of adding to, changing, or taking from the

word of God, and will be held responsible for it in the day of judgment. Yet hundreds of religious teachers are doing that very thing all over this Bible land to-day. There certainly will be some fearful accounts to be rendered when the roll is called in that great day.

There is abundant warning given to the churches against such teachers, and they are well armed against such, if they would only avail themselves of it. Here is a sample of it: "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power." (Col. 2: 8-10.) This warning ought to be heeded by every church and by every Christian wherever their lots may be cast. In these days of so many errors and so many winds of doctrine, and so many innovations and fads, people cannot watch too closely against such things. These men, like the ancient Pharisees, compass sea and land to make disciples to their innovations. Some of them go only among churches that others have built up, and are doing everything in their power to sidetrack and capture these churches as their own; then they reorganize them and claim they have established another church, and hold the house. Watch, and avoid all such men. It is our Christian duty to guard against them. They are spiritual frauds, and will capsize every church they can possibly get hold of. Watch, therefore, and prevent their headway. The church must be kept true and loyal to Christ, or it

will be carried so far from him he will cease to own it, and all will be lost in apostasy. Christians, therefore, should watch, and hold firmly to the word of God as their only ark of safety.

Peter is very explicit on the things that will keep churches and all Christians free from such dangers: "Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in your brotherly kindness love." (2 Pet. 1: 5-7.) These three verses are exceedingly full of divine instruction, and, if followed, will make people just what the Lord wants and requires them to be in this life. He was writing to Christians, to those who had already come into the church, had already started in the narrow way that leads to endless joy. Hence, they had faith already in God and Christ, and in the word of God, the words of the Holy Spirit. But there was need that this faith should become more active, and develop these other traits of character so important and essential to the Christian's hereafter.

The rendering of this passage in the new version is in some respects more expressive than the old. In the first place, they were to use diligence in doing the things required. They had already escaped, had come out of, the corruptions of the world and sin by becoming Christians, and for that very reason he urges diligence in doing the things commanded in these verses. "In your faith supply virtue." This is a rather peculiar, but wonderfully expressive, clause. Faith lies at the foundation of

Christian character, and must really produce all the characteristics mentioned in these verses. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hence, every step, every item of the Christian life, must be based on faith, must arise from an earnest faith in the word of God. Faith must go with the child of God through life, and must be the foundation of all he does in the service of God in perfecting the Christian character. We must walk by faith in everything we do in that service.

Every child of God needs virtue in his character. The word "virtue" means that one is clean, pure, chaste, upright in everything he does in his whole course of life. It also includes courage, and it is generally understood that courage is a large part of its meaning in this passage. Every member of the church needs courage to carry out at all times his convictions of truth and duty as learned from the word of God. Many break down in some of the most important matters of the Christian life from lack of courage. They lack it mainly because they do not cultivate it; do not study, strive, and pray that they may have the courage to always stand by the truth and be faithful in the discharge of every duty.

Courage has been necessary in all the ages to make a reliable and faithful servant of God. Joshua was commanded more than once to be of good courage, when he became the successor of Moses and was to lead the children of Israel into the promised land. He needed courage, for the difficulties were great. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, broke down again and again for lack of courage. He was, in the main, a good sort of man, but he did not have

the courage to withstand the wily Ahab. All Christians have a formidable enemy to encounter in their own fleshly propensities, and the many temptations thrown in their pathway by Satan and by a wicked world; and if they do not have a good degree of courage, they will fall by the way under some of these trials.

Then with equal emphasis we are commanded to supply knowledge. That means to learn well the word of God, that we may always know what is our duty under any emergency that may arise. The highest wisdom we can possibly attain to is a knowledge of things divine and of the duties that the Lord wants us to do in this life. To obtain this knowledge, we must study the New Testament, and must study it prayerfully and be devoutly in earnest. Who would not delight to study that book, its themes are so sublime and its characters so grand? The holy and beautiful life of the Son of God transcends any life ever read of, or contemplated. The great beauty of it to us is that a study of his life shows us plainly how to overcome Satan and all his combined hosts. Then the tragedy of the cross, in which Jesus died that we might live, is the most important one that has occurred since time began. The teaching also of the Holy Spirit sheds a beautiful light on the pathway of obedience into the church on earth, and, through the church, into the home of the soul. It teaches how to imitate that lovely and lovable life that eclipses all others—the life of Jesus. It will lead us along the path of duty, purity, holiness, usefulness, and happiness on earth, and prepare us for admission through the gates into the eternal city.

Is not this enough to stimulate the children of God to read this sacred volume, that they may supply knowledge in their faith? Better be ignorant of everything else on earth than to be ignorant of the narrow way that leads to the eternal paradise, the home of the blessed.

Then we are commanded to supply self-control, to be temperate in all things; to deny anything and everything that would lead us from the narrow way, or in any way hinder progress in the life divine. This is an exceedingly important means in the Lord's divine economy to help the poor, struggling child of God to gain a heavenly crown.

Patience next demands attention in the comprehensive catalogue of Christian graces. There is something lovely and beautiful in patience; it imparts sunshine, pleasure, and happiness to all around its possessor. But impatience, peevishness, and fretfulness casts the shadows of unpleasantness upon all that come in the reach of those who cultivate it. No one has the right to be forever raising clouds of darkness on the pathway of those around, and especially those of his own home and family. Many a home is forever under the shadows on account of the habitual impatience and fretfulness of some one who is under obligations high as heaven to brighten that home and make its inmates happy.

The nominal Christian that ignores this command to supply patience in faith commits a double offense. On the one hand, he disobeys a positive command of God, and becomes a rebel in God's government. In the next place, he sins against his own soul and everybody about him by continuing to practice a ruinous and exceedingly disagreeable course of life.

Let all, therefore, cultivate patience, who desire after a while to walk the golden streets.

Then follow godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. These are all essential to strengthen and help Christians, and are beautiful characteristics that greatly adorn the Christian life. These principles must be carefully considered by all that would reach the eternal home. There is nothing but Christianity, and it faithfully lived, that can exalt, purify, and civilize man, and prepare him for the associations of the pure and holy of earth and of the blood-washed throng of the finally saved in heaven. Who would not strive and sacrifice to reach that blessed abode? All that will intrust the direction of their whole lives to the word of God are as sure of heaven as that the Bible is true.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Christian Life a Race.

“Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12: 1, 2.) This is an exceedingly practical passage. The chapter is full of examples, referring us to the characters of the many godly people mentioned in the preceding chapter, also representing the Christian life as a race, and referring to the grand example of the Son of God. All these are well worth our study and meditation. The ancient worthies to whom the apostle refers are represented as a great “cloud of witnesses.” The word “witnesses” is not used in the sense of spectators looking on to see what we do; they are witnesses in the sense of testimony, testifying what earnest faith and devotion to the will of God can accomplish in this life.

Abraham was but a common sort of a man, living among idolaters, till God called him and told him to go out from among them, from his kindred, even his father’s house. Abraham started; he had

faith enough from the beginning to start. He made some mistakes and blunders at first, but kept on till he was separated from all his kindred and countrymen, as God had said. Thus his faith grew, obedience increased, until nothing was too great for him to undertake when God commanded, even to the offering of his own son upon the altar as a burnt offering. Thus by believing and obeying God he became one of the purest, best, and most obedient men that ever lived on this earth. His testimony, therefore, is exceedingly strong as an illustration of faith and obedience. In fact, he was a model of submission to the will of God in all that was required of him.

That chapter, indeed, is full of similar examples which make up this cloud of witnesses by which we are encompassed. These should forcibly stimulate us to faithfully do the will of God in all things. The apostle puts these examples down as a stimulating power upon us to "run with patience the race that is set before us." This race refers to the Christian life, the life of holiness which all of God's children are required to live. All who become Christians enter upon this race, and thus publicly pledge themselves before heaven and earth to strive to run it with patience. Hence, this language is addressed to Christians, and must be applied to them now. When sinners are addressed, the first principles of the oracles of God must be presented to them, so they may enter upon this race; but to those who have entered, the things which belong to the Christian life must be addressed.

The figure of a race is very expressive. People of ancient times made much ado over foot races.

They had regular times and places appointed for them, and rules and fixed regulations for entering them, and also fixed rules for running the races. Those who violated the rules for entering were debarred from the race; those who violated the rules for running were debarred from the prize. The same principle is invariably true, both in entering and in running the Christian race. None can enter upon that race but by a humble obedience to the gospel of Christ. Those who do not obey the law of entrance are not in the race at all, and will not receive the prize. In those races the men themselves ran on foot. Hence the appropriateness of the figure. Men run horses in races now. Then the men ran; and if they did not run lawfully, they were not crowned as victors and got no prizes. So in the Christian race the prize is offered only to those who run the race as the great Head of the church requires, and continue to run it to the end of life. There is a difference in one respect, and that is as to the number that may receive the prize. All may receive the prize at the end of the Christian race that will enter and run lawfully, whereas in the foot races not more than one was likely to be crowned as victor. The likeness is in the matter of entering and running according to law, and in the fact that we must enter and must run, or no prize can be gained.

It is also true that all useless weights or hindrances were to be laid aside when the contestants ran, in order to have any assurance of getting the prize. In practicing for those foot races, they frequently carried extra weights and encumbrances upon their muscles to make them strong and active,

so as to enable them to run with greater speed in the race. Had they undertaken to run the race with these extra weights or encumbrances upon them, they would have made a failure. So Christians frequently take upon themselves incumbrances that will hinder and forever blight all prospect of receiving the prize, eternal life. Any love of the world, of its pleasures, its treasures, its honors, its emoluments, that would stifle or choke out the love of God and of Christ, would defeat the prize of eternal life.

These must all be laid aside, or we may just as well give up all idea of the prize at the end of the race. We must not only lay these aside when we enter upon the race, become Christians, but we must keep them down. It would have done those men no good to lay their weights aside on entering the race, and then take them right up again. Neither will it profit Christians to lay down their hindrances and then take them up again. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" are all too heavy to carry through life and win the prize and wear the crown.

But the apostle speaks of some particular sin as the sin which easily besets. It is generally thought this was the sin of apostasy from the faith of the gospel back into Judaism, which seems to have been prevalent among Jewish Christians. This may have been the besetting sin among them. The Greek conveys the idea of something of oft-repeated occurrence and of a tempting character. That was true of the sin of apostasy among the Hebrew Christians, as the unbelieving Jews were constantly doing all they could to induce those who had em-

braced the gospel to give it up and go back to the law of Moses again. But the Greek would embrace equally well any sin that would be a constant temptation to the children of God to do things that would be out of harmony with the will of God. Christians living where there is an everlasting struggle to make money, whether by fair or foul means, some of whom are succeeding in gaining wealth and living in luxury, are in continual danger of being overcome by such things. Those who are fond of worldly amusements and live where such things are going on around them are in continual danger. Those who are fond of theaters are in great danger in living where they are continually going on. Those fond of dancing are always in danger where such things go on regularly around them. It is a continual temptation to them to engage in things they are fond of and at all inclined to do. It is said a continual dropping wears away stone. It is equally true that things we love and want to engage in become less and less sinful in our eyes, and the danger of our being carried away from truth and duty continually increases. So we should be especially careful to rigidly lay aside all such encumbrances by keeping out of their reach, for we cannot win the race for eternal life and indulge in such things. We are living in a world and in an age in which there is always something going on about us that is liable to draw us away from our duties to the Lord. So this injunction to lay aside besetting sins is just as applicable to Christians now as it was to the Hebrew Christians. There are always some doubtful things going on around us in this world, by which any child

of God might be led into wrong, that he needs to carefully and continually guard against.

In the next place, it is exceedingly important that we continually strive to run the race set before us with great patience and perseverance. The running of this race must engage our leading thoughts, desires, and aspirations. We need to study the divine rules that govern this race day by day, and learn to love, revere, and most heartily approve these divine rules all the time, and make them the rules of our lives. If we do not read and study them regularly, we shall be liable to violate them at any time, and thus defeat our right to the prize, the tree of life. "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to come to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city." (Rev. 22: 14.) This eternal city, with the right to the tree of life, is the great prize that is offered to every faithful child of God.

The rules, or requirements, by which such a prize can be gained should never be counted irksome, burdensome, or unpleasant. We should, therefore, never become weary or impatient in observing the rules by which this greatest of all races is to be run. There is no other prize to be compared to that which is offered the faithful child of God. "The wages of sin is death"—that is, eternal death—while—"the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 6: 23.) Who can rightly and fully measure the difference between eternal death and eternal life? Yet the matter is so placed before us that if we fail to so run as to gain eternal life, we are then sure of eternal death. There are but these two destinies hereafter; and if we fail

to patiently run the race set before us, fail to live the Christian life as the word of God directs, then eternal death is certain. Brethren, do you seriously study these two destinies, and what it will be to miss the one and be hurled down to the other? Surely all ought to study this well, and by faithful living prepare to be worthy of eternal life.

There are many things over which Christians allow themselves to become impatient, restless, and fretful, by which success in the Christian life is greatly hindered. Some become impatient under the wholesome, the necessary, restraints of Christianity—restraints from things that are out of harmony with the purity and devotion of the requirements of the Lord at the hands of his servants—and break over and do things to gratify fleshly minds, over which sincere repentance has to be done, or the soul lost. Hence the necessity of great patience in running this race. Indeed, it cannot be run without patience. We need patience every day in combating our temper, the passions of anger, hatred, malice, jealousy, envy, and all sorts of bitterness. It is only by patiently considering the word of God, cultivating the spirit of Christ and the great principles of love that we can overcome the sinful emotions of the flesh.

Patience is a wonderful power in the work of overcoming and controlling the flesh, with its affections and lusts. "And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." (James 1:4.) No man, therefore, can perfect the Christian character without the exercise of patience. "Patience," "forbearance," "long-suffering," "endurance," and such words are closely

allied to each other in meaning, and each one is sometimes so used as to include much of the meaning of the others. Thayer says of the original word: "In the New Testament, the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings."

Job is an illustration of this. "Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful." (James 5: 11.) This allusion to Job, the sort of patience and endurance he had, is a forcible illustration of what patience does for a man that possesses it. Never did any man suffer more and greater trials in one day than Job. He was a rich man, and had thousands of sheep and oxen, of camels and asses. All these were destroyed or captured. The house was blown down upon his seven sons and three daughters, and they were all slain, and nearly all of his servants. All these things were reported to him in quick succession by the few servants that escaped. As fast as one told his sad story, another would come dashing up and tell his, till the news was all broken to him. This was surely enough to have stunned and paralyzed any ordinary man, or put him into a maniacal state. Yet Job, in all this loss and sad bereavement, meekly said: "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah." "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." (Job 1: 21, 22.)

This fully presents the definition of the word rendered "patience" in the New Testament. Job had

strong faith in God, was fully determined to trust him, and was so thoroughly loyal to him that he would not allow the loss of his property and all his children to turn him away from God, nor to even insinuate that God had done him any injustice or had even neglected him. Job was patient indeed. He had endurance, meekness, and long-suffering. He had, indeed, all those qualities that manifest perfection in faith, patience, and loyalty to God. He had cultivated these things, had exercised them, till he was as nearly perfect in them as men ever become. With all the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, only a few equal Job in patience and all the characteristics that make a true servant of God. Christians should remember that they are positively commanded to add patience, to put it on, to exercise it, so as to make it a prominent part of the Christian life.

When Christ was foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the calamities that would be connected with it, he said to his disciples: "In your patience ye shall win your souls." (Luke 21: 19.) But how could patience lead them to win their souls? By doing as Job did, by cultivating and exercising such a degree of patience as to keep them loyal and faithful to God. All who did this were saved from the literal destruction of Jerusalem; and if they kept it up until death, it won their souls for heaven. Paul says: "Strengthened with all power, according to the might of his glory, unto all patience and long-suffering with joy." (Col. 1: 11.) Thus all these characteristics of patience, endurance, long-suffering, perseverance in every good word and work, resisting and overcoming evil passions, and

all sorts of temptations and trials, and maintaining perfect loyalty to God, are all so connected and so important that we can leave no one of them out and have a perfect character in the sight of the Lord. Let no one, therefore, suppose he can neglect patience, and yet so perfect the Christian character as to reach the home in glory. We as the children of God are fully responsible for the possession of patience, and must cultivate it continually, or our Christian characters will be incomplete, and we shall fail to win our souls at last.

And in this entire Christian race we are to look to Jesus, "the author and perfecter of our faith." He provided the gospel plan of salvation; he has all authority in heaven and on earth regarding matters of salvation. In him are all blessings found that pertain to the church on earth; in him all the promises of God are made sure to the Lord's people. He is emphatically and to all intents and purposes the Head of the church, and his word must govern us in all the work and worship of the church. He has not left us to legislate one single thing in his service. Whoever, therefore, does anything of the sort, enters into high treason against Jesus, the King and sole authority in all things in his kingdom. He is called "King of kings, and Lord of lords," in Rev. 19: 16, and we must regard him as such.

One of the greatest sins ever committed by the Lord's people is to presume to enact laws by which they shall be governed in anything pertaining to their work or worship in his kingdom. It is virtually dethroning him and assuming to reign in his stead. This is the very thing the "man of sin" has

been and is still assuming to do, and for which all such are to be destroyed. We are, therefore, to regard ourselves simply as subjects of his kingdom, not as lords and lawmakers in it. We are to be law observers, not lawmakers. Christ has given us a perfect law, "the law of liberty." (James 1:25.) If we obey this law, we are free men in Christ, and assured of God's richest blessings here and hereafter. If we do not obey this law, we are none of his. Jesus also lived a perfect life, and has left a complete example as to what a perfect life is; and he requires that we follow his steps, that we shall live as he lived, continually doing the will of God.

Paul, speaking of God, said: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. 1:30.) This passage is full of meaning. It is through Christ and what he has done for us, and has revealed to us by the Spirit through the apostles, that all our wisdom comes regarding salvation. Through him we are taught God's system of righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Through him we learn how to become righteous according to the will of God; also, how to become sanctified, consecrated to that will, and made holy; and the full meaning and extent of redemption in Christ, and how to secure it. We are, therefore, to look to Christ for everything in the whole matter of our soul's salvation.

It is wonderful how much we can learn as to godly living by studying the life of Christ, and how he conducted himself under all the circumstances and trying situations in which he was so often placed. He was placed in all conceivable trials and

temptations by Satan himself, by the captious Pharisees, scribes, high priests, and elders, in all the shrewdness, sharpness, and mean devices they could possibly invent; yet he always came out of them unscathed, and never said or did one thing that was the least bit out of harmony with the high claim that he was the Son of God. He always turned their plans and schemes against them in such way as to make them feel their defeat, and never showed any sort of weakness, ill temper, or any desire to harm them. They followed him, hounded him up and down the country during the whole three years and a half of his personal ministry; they insulted him, slandered him, accused him of being a friend of publicans and sinners, meaning it in a low, bad sense; yet in all these trials he never did or said a single thing that would not furnish a good example for the purest saint on earth, or that would in the least lower or degrade an angel from heaven. He was never for a moment puzzled as to what answer to give to their most intricate questions, nor did he ever contradict anything he had said before, or anything any inspired man had ever said as to what he should do or be. So we may look to him always as an Exemplar that never made a mistake. He was never out of patience, and stands before us as a perfect example of that virtue. Though continually tempted, he did no sin, nor was guile ever found in him.

We should, therefore, study his example continually, and strive earnestly and prayerfully to follow it. He governed his whole life by his Father's will, and all Christians should strive to do the same. He never rendered evil for evil, but always good.

He was purely unselfish, and always ready to bless and help others, even his enemies. What a beautiful and holy people Christians would be if they would follow the teaching and example of Jesus as it stands on record in the New Testament! Yet how many there are who are looking to and trusting in uninspired men for light and guidance in the attainment of salvation, instead of the divine guidance and example of the Son of God!

Another item of importance in looking to Christ is the sacredness of his blood, for without it no sinner can be saved. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." (Luke 22: 20.) Of Christ it is said: "In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace." (Eph. 1: 7.) "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1: 7.) These passages show how thoroughly we are indebted to the blood of Christ for the remission of our sins. We must, therefore, look to him through his blood, "the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus." (Heb. 13: 20.) We must look to him through his blood in the sense of appropriating the benefits of that blood just as the word of the Lord directs. We cannot expect the benefits of that blood simply because it was shed for the remission of sins. We have to comply with the laws of remission before we can receive its benefits in our behalf. So we have to look to Christ through all his appointments before we can expect the blessings of the new and eternal covenant.

This race for heaven is truly a grand one, in which all our interests for eternity are involved. If we fail in this, all is lost forever. We cannot win this race unless we strive lawfully. People have sought out many new ways of running this race. But there is no promise to any except those that run it "looking unto Jesus;" and none can look to him with success, except by running the very way he has devised and pointed out to us in the precious words of eternal truth. Those who run this race after the devices and doctrines of men can only look to men for the reward. God promises none on that line. Our faith is never perfected by Jesus, except as we obey him. He is the "author of eternal salvation" to none but those that obey him. (Heb. 5: 9.) He was not crowned "King of kings, and Lord of lords," till he had fully and completely obeyed his Father's will on earth. He "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Surely, if he could endure all that he had to suffer in all that he did in preparing a plan of salvation for us, we can endure all that a faithful Christian life requires, in order to live with him in heaven forever. All of us want to wear the crown; but the trouble is in bearing the cross. The Jews all wanted to go into the promised land; but few were willing to continue in God's will till they could reach it, while nearly all that started from Egypt died outside. So we shall fail to reach heaven, unless we patiently live the Christian life to the end. Surely the joys that are set before us, the joys of an eternal home in heaven, ought to stimulate us

to run, and not be weary; to walk the narrow way, and not faint.

We ought, indeed, to rejoice always in running a race, living a life that involves so much good for us here and the home in glory beyond. Jesus said: "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9: 62.) Shall it be that all the great and precious promises of God will fail to keep us in the right way, the way of truth and righteousness, during the short period of this life? Though earthly friends may fail us in this race; though disappointments, crosses, and losses may come, God will never forsake his own dear, faithful children. Even when the dark shadows of death overtake them, the Lord will enfold them in his gracious, loving arms for evermore.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Examples from the Jewish People.

It is understood that the Jewish people, both in their obedience and disobedience to the laws of God, are largely typical as to Christians. Their story bears upon the necessity of continued obedience to the will of God as contained in the New Covenant; and the conduct of those people, especially as to their disobedience, is given to us extensively by the apostles, as examples for us. Teaching by examples is a wonderfully forcible sort of teaching. In them we can plainly see the principle upon which God dealt with the Jews, and likewise the principle upon which he will deal with us, since they and God's dealings with them are our examples. They show us very plainly the estimate God places upon his will, his divine requirements. They show us, also, that God did not deal with them as a tyrant, but that he chastened them purely for their good.

Everybody that reads the Bible knows that the only free and purely happy people this world holds, or ever has held, are those who most faithfully follow the teaching of the word of God. Sinners are always in bondage; they are never free; and sin is a very hard taskmaster. Those who are in bondage under sin can never be permanently happy. Adam and Eve were free and happy till they sinned. When they yielded themselves to enter into sin,

they entered dark shadows of bondage, of fear, and remorse that follows a guilty conscience, and were never free again. During the greater part of the life of Abraham he was one of the purely free and happy men of antiquity, because he was one of the most faithful servants of God that ever blessed the world. The apostle Paul was one of God's free men, though often in prison and chains. So the reason why God dealt with the Jewish people "rigidly," as some would say, was in order that they might become a free and happy people; and when, as a people, they obeyed God, they were the nearest a free and happy people of all the nations of antiquity; but when they became incorrigibly wicked, chastisements would come, and wax worse and worse, till they would humble themselves before the Lord, break off from their sins, and cry mightily unto the Lord for help. The Lord, in his abundant mercy, would hear them and send the relief for which they were pleading.

We will to some extent present the Jewish people in the lifetime of Joshua and of several generations following. When Joshua became the leader of the Jewish people instead of Moses, he and all of them had just had large experience and observation as to God's dealings with his people. The forty-years' wandering had just ended, during which all their fathers had died on account of their sins. Even Moses had been deprived of the privilege of leading the people into the promised land on account of his sin at Meribah Kadesh, and he had died upon the lonely mountain top, whence he had been viewing that goodly land, and was buried by the Lord, so that no man ever knew the place

where his remains were laid. These things ought to have seriously impressed them with the importance of obeying God; and, in the main, they did obey him through the lifetime of Joshua. Their miraculous crossing of the Jordan when it was overflowing its banks, and the wonderful deliverance of Jericho into their hands, ought to have made an impression that time could never wear out. Joshua was one of those unusually good men that occasionally bless the world.

He and Caleb went through all the temptations that caught so many in the toils and caused them to wander in the wilderness till they all died, without yielding to any of them, and were especially named and complimented for not having yielded to sin as did the others. Their names, therefore, stood upon the roll of honor. Then Joshua was honored with the very exalted privilege of taking the children of Israel into Canaan and locating them in their long-promised country. He led them in the wars that made room for them, and was faithful in all the Lord appointed for him to do. There is no sin charged against Joshua. He was certainly a very excellent and honorable character, and one well worthy of imitation. He taught the Jewish people the right way, and exerted such an influence upon them for good that they were faithful to the Lord all the days of Joshua and during the lives of the elders that lived in that period. Before his death he called the elders and leaders of the people together and made a remarkably strong appeal to them to be faithful to the Lord. He said to them: "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods

which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah. And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; for Jehovah our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed; and Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites that dwelt in the land: therefore we also will serve Jehovah; for he is our God." (Josh. 24: 14-18.)

This was certainly a very solemn appeal made to them by one they so tenderly loved and in whom they lovingly confided. He had led them for many years through war and conflicts, had led them to victory and triumphs over their wicked foes, and was then close to his journey's end. The appeal, therefore, was very tender and touching to them. He put his appeal in such form as to cause them to speak out emphatically. He first exhorted them directly to fear and serve Jehovah, who had brought them out of Egypt; but if it seemed to them evil to serve Jehovah, they were to choose between the gods their fathers had served and the gods of the Amorites in the land where they then were. They very emphatically answered: "Far be it from us

that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods." They thus showed themselves willing to forsake all idolatry for the sake of Jehovah; and those of the elders that made this response likely carried it out, because, while those elders lived after Joshua's death, they all did very well. Joshua's expressed resolution that he and his house would serve the Lord, shows a determination from which nothing could turn him. So he died as he had lived, fully loyal to God.

But when Joshua was dead, and the elders that had known his godly life, the Jews began to rapidly depart. In the first place, the masses of them began early to disregard the commands of God regarding those heathen people. They refused to drive them out as God had said, and to destroy their idolatry as commanded, but made leagues with them and began to intermarry among them, which God had forbidden them to do. Very many of the tribes were in this sort of rebellion. They also began to go into idolatry with the nations among whom they were marrying and giving in marriage. The Lord has always been forbearing and long-suffering toward his people, and has always given abundant warnings against evil, so as to leave them without excuse. So an angel of the Lord was sent to testify against their evil course, and tell them of the consequences of the course they were pursuing, and thus to reprove them for their wickedness. He told them the heathen people they were sparing would become as thorns in their sides, and their gods would be a snare unto them.

The people wept over this sad message, but did not turn from their evil ways. They grew grad-

ually worse and worse, until the forbearance of Jehovah wore out. So the following terrible statement of their horrible corruptions was made: "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and served the Baalim; and they forsook Jehovah, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the peoples that were round about them, and bowed themselves down unto them: and they provoked Jehovah to anger. And they forsook Jehovah, and served Baal and the Ashtaroth." (Judg. 2: 11-13.) This was truly a severe indictment against those people; and that it should occur so soon after Joshua had made such an appeal to them not to forsake the Lord, and such solemn and positive promises were made that they would serve the Lord, seems almost unaccountably strange. It was likely scarcely thirty years from the death of Joshua until they were plunging into these terrible depths of idolatry. The old men that made the promises to continue to serve the Lord had likely passed out, and their children soon began to go their own way.

Humanity is a frail affair at best. This is especially true when they have no man of age, firmness, and determination to teach, admonish, and lead them, as Joshua had been. The masses of people, and especially the young, need always a man of age, piety, and devotion to God, to lead them the right way—a man, too, in whom they have confidence as to his own uprightness in life; and it would seem as if the Jews at this time had no such leaders. At any rate, the masses of those people were in a very bad way at the time the above indictments were

registered against them. It does not mean that everybody had gone to that extent of idolatry; but the masses had. These facts show the importance of continued watchfulness on the part of the Lord's people to-day, lest they also fall away after the same example of unbelief.

From these facts concerning the rapidity with which they plunged into sin, we need not be astonished at what immediately follows: "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that despoiled them." (Verse 14.) These spoilers likely were marauding bands, robbers, or bandits that stole around through the country, seizing whatever they could lay their hands on. But things soon grew worse, and heavier chastisements came upon them. "And the children of Israel did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, and forgot Jehovah their God, and served the Baalim and Ashe-roth. Therefore the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years." (Judg. 3: 7, 8.) This was a severe chastisement, and they felt it deeply. To be in bondage under a strange nation that took possession of whatever suited them, depriving the captives of liberty and independence, so they had to get permission for all they did and used, was no small matter. It soon waked them up to a sense of their sins, so that, as these eight years of bondage began to drag their heavy weight toward the end, they humbled themselves, and began to look to the Lord for help; for this king doubtless forced them to pay a heavy

tribute, which took all they could make, except barely enough to live upon.

“And when the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah, Jehovah raised up a savior to the children of Israel, who saved them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother.” (Verse 9.) The Lord is always ready to bless and help people when they make themselves worthy of help. So the Spirit came mightily upon Othniel, and he and the children of Israel prevailed over their enemies, so that they freed themselves from the yoke of that foreign, wicked king, and they were blessed with peace in the land for forty years; and Othniel judged them. He was of a good family, closely related to Caleb, who, with Joshua, stood so close and loyal to Jehovah at the rebellion against going in to possess the land of Canaan. It is wonderful what an influence one truly godly man can have over people, even a whole nation!

But as the forty years were rolling rapidly by, Othniel, their leader, deliverer, and judge, died; and, left without his oversight, advice, teaching, and the influence of his godly life, they soon became indifferent to the service of God; they lapsed back into sin again, and worshiped the gods of the heathen people about them, and became so corrupt that the Lord raised up another enemy against them, which was Eglon, the king of Moab, a neighboring people that they should have driven out. He also associated with him the people of Ammon and Amalek. They overpowered Israel, and held them in bondage for eighteen years. Again were they made humble by this sore bondage, and were so brought down that they again cried most piteously to the

Lord; and when he saw that they had again humbled themselves, he raised them up another judge and deliverer named Ehud, of the tribe of Benjamin. He slew Eglon, the king, by strategy, went out and gathered an army, and overpowered Moab, and slew ten thousand valiant men of them, and their enemies were subdued, and this time they had peace for eighty years.

It does look as if these things ought to have so impressed the children of Israel that they would have refrained from sin, and would have learned to be a faithful and loyal people. But—alas!—humanity is not much to be relied upon. We, as the children of God, should learn from these examples to keep close to the Lord, and keep his word continually in our hearts, and follow its teaching every day and hour. Only in this way is any man safe from the wiles of the great enemy of souls.

These people went into sin again, and a man named Shamgar was made judge, and saved them again, slaying six hundred of the Philistines with an oxgoad. There is not much said about this trouble. But another lapse came after Ehud's death. "And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, when Ehud was dead. And Jehovah sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host was Sisera, who dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles." (Judg. 4: 1, 2.) A woman named Deborah, wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at this time, and the children of Israel came to her to be judged. She was not commander of an army, nor anything like that; but evidently she was a godly woman, and likely godly men were scarce at

that time. She dwelt in the hill country of Ephraim, and the people went to her for judgment. She evidently judged them in a quiet sort of way, and was inspired and able to foretell things.

At this time this king had been oppressing this people for twenty years. He had a strong army, with nine hundred chariots of iron, and was heavily oppressing the Jewish people. Deborah sent and called a man named Barak, and told him to make ready to carry an army against Jabin, and that the Lord would deliver Jabin's forces into his hands; but for some unexpressed reason Barak manifested a little of a rebellious spirit, and replied to Deborah: "If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go." (Verse 8.) Deborah told him she would certainly go with him, but that the trip would not be to his honor, for Jehovah would sell Sisera, Jabin's general, into the hands of a woman; and so she went.

When the forces joined battle, the Lord was with the Jews, and Sisera and his forces were soon routed, in spite of their nine hundred chariots of iron, and Sisera fled away on foot, trying to escape. He made his way into "the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite." The Kenites sprang from the family of the wife of Moses. These and Jabin's people were on friendly terms. When he went into her tent, he asked for water, and she gave him milk to drink. He lay down, told Jael to stand in the door, and that if any came and inquired if there was a man in there, to tell them, "No." So Sisera, being weary, was soon asleep; and Jael took a sharp-pointed tent pin and a hammer, went to him softly as he was sleeping, and drove the tent

pin through his temples and into the ground. Quickly he was a dead man. Soon Barak came along in pursuit, and Jael said to him, "Here is the man you seek," and showed him the dead body of Sisera. Thus the army of Jabin, the Canaanitish king that had given the Jews so much trouble, was almost demolished, with his nine hundred chariots. They kept on until Jabin was destroyed. In this way those wicked people that were left in Canaan were mostly destroyed finally, but not till they had terribly chastened and punished the children of Israel.

These things show what a terrible scourge and destroyer sin is. If the Israelites had not sinned so terribly, they might long before this time have cleared the land of Canaan of all these wicked, idolatrous people, and had all that fine country to themselves, and been living in peace and plenty. Instead of that, they themselves were scourged, brought into bondage, and almost worn out from time to time, thus verifying these words of Paul: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The children of Israel had been sowing to the flesh, and of the flesh had been reaping sad ruin. The full extent that they suffered on account of their sins, no tongue can tell and no pen can describe. The two sides of sin and suffering, and of righteousness, success, and prosperity, show themselves so clearly in the varied vicissitudes through which these people passed that no one can read these things and not see and realize the great sinfulness of sin, and the sufferings and ruin that it brings. Surely they were very slow to learn, even from their own experiences. The very same expe-

riences over and over, with the very same sort of results, and still they were cured only temporarily. When their enemies were subdued and they were set free, it was only a period of a few years until they were repeating the sins of their ancestors.

But such is humanity, and such has been the history of the whole human race. No family or tribe or nation of people have ever remained a holy and upright people very long at a time. Other people have shown themselves to be unstable as well as the Jews. They are by no means the only sinners; but they surely have been, and still are, very great sinners. Millions of them to-day, though reared with the knowledge of God, still reject the Son of God, with all the blessings he has provided for the human race, and are still in rebellion against God and against the interests of their own souls. With the advantages we have in the history of those people, we surely ought to learn to be more faithful in these days, with all the additional light that is afforded us in the glorious gospel of Christ. We surely ought to see more clearly the weakness of humanity and the great importance of availing ourselves of the help the Lord has provided for us through Jesus Christ our Lord. There certainly has never lived a people on earth with so many advantages of light and of knowledge from others, so many examples of the sins and failures of others, and the causes of those failures. We can look at the sins and consequent failures, bondage, and ruin that befell those people, and see as in a glass the dangers that beset us as human beings, and the wrecks and pitfalls that lie in our future, unless we lead better lives than they led, by striving to un-

derstand the word of the Lord and to follow more closely its divine directions.

We can see how and why those people made so many and such sad failures, and why they had to undergo such awful sufferings. They failed to love God, to love his word, his holy will; they loved the world and the ways of the world and sin more than they loved God and his truth. They, therefore, followed the ways of the world and of sin instead of following the ways of God and of holiness. And as they failed so often to live up to the light they had, and turned aside after sin and folly, and brought such woes and sufferings upon themselves, had we not better be careful, lest we trample upon our opportunities, sow to the flesh rather than to the Spirit, and bring woes and sufferings upon ourselves also? The woes that we may bring are farther reaching and of a more serious nature than the sins and consequences they brought upon themselves. They brought enemies upon themselves by their sins, brought wars and bloodshed, brought bondage, brought hunger and thirst, brought the loss of earthly homes, broke up family relations, and destroyed peace, safety, and everything that makes life endurable. But what do we bring upon ourselves now by turning from God and Christ and the precious light of eternal truth? We blight the purity and sweetness of our Christian homes, and lose our own souls in eternal darkness and woe. What advantage shall we have at the great day of accounts over them? They did not have the light of eternal life nor of eternal death before them; but we have it in all its fullness, and will be that much more blameworthy if we close

our eyes to all the precious light we have, and turn to walk in the ways of sin and death. Surely we will not allow all these examples to pass before our eyes and make no impression upon us for good.

The apostles refer us many times to the Jews as our exemplars—to the righteous ones as examples of faith and its power and influence upon men for good; to the examples of disobedience and the sufferings resulting, to impress us with the certainty that we shall be called upon to render an account for the evils we do in departing from the living God. He is no respecter of persons, and as certainly as he held the Jews to a strict account for their unfaithfulness, so certainly will he hold us to an even more rigid account than he did them, because we have so much more light than they had. The apostle Paul says: "A man that hath set at naught Moses' law dieth without compassion on the word of two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, think ye, shall he be judged worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (Heb. 10: 28, 29.)

It is a most serious thing for a man with the light of the New Covenant before him, and the examples of the Old Covenant also recorded for his benefit, to turn away from God, from Christ, from the blood of Christ, and count them as but nothing, and follow "the world, the flesh, and the devil." There can be no apology made for the man that comes to the light, embraces it, walks in it for a time, sees the beauty and holiness of the light, and by faith looks into the home of the soul, and then al-

lows the flesh and the allurements of the world to turn him away from the light into the darkness of sin and death. Since, therefore, the many examples of the unfaithful Jewish people are given us, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they did, let us study them, treasure them, meditate upon them. Let us also pray God to help us to so regard these examples that we may be continually strengthened and assisted by them to lead a faithful, Christian life.

One singular feature about those Jews was in the fact that their reformations were so short. They seemed to get very humble while their great distress was upon them; but when the trouble was taken away, they lapsed back into the same old sins in so short a time as to make the impression that their apparent repentance was on account of their sufferings, rather than on account of their sins. That sort of repentance never lasts long. But we should remember there was not much provision made under the law of Moses for the cultivation and purification of the heart, or the cultivation of a pure and tender conscience. So if under Christianity, in which we have so many advantages they did not have, we go into sin, there cannot be the allowances made for our sins that were made for theirs. We are better prepared to see and realize the blackness and enormity of sin than they were. So when Christians sin, they should learn not merely to look at the shame or disgrace it may bring, but at the awful blight that sin may bring upon the soul.

The disgrace that sin may bring is a very small matter as compared with the guilt of sin. Sin is to

be more feared than leprosy of the body. The latter may destroy the body; while the former, if indulged, will destroy the soul forever. So the children of God to-day should strive honestly to get rid of the guilt, the awful stain of sin upon the inner man. The Jews kept on repeating their sins throughout the age of the judges and of the kings of Israel. These sins are abundantly given in the Old Testament, and the punishments resulting therefrom, and, by the goodness of God, stand before us as lasting warnings of the awful dangers that hang over us if we practice sin. Let all, therefore, study these things and shun sin as they would shun the horrors of eternal ruin.

CHAPTER XIX.

Unauthorized and Ruinous Opinions.

Paul says: "But foolish and ignorant questionings refuse, knowing that they gender strifes." (2 Tim. 2: 23.) With the plainness of the New Testament on all matters of faith and practice, it is astonishing that there should be so many unfounded opinions rising up among those claiming to be the followers of Christ. An opinion is a notion, idea, impression, view, or judgment formed, for which there is no direct testimony or information found in the oracles of God upon which to base it. There is a vast difference between faith and opinion. Faith is the belief of what is stated in the word of God. Whatever the word of God plainly says should always be regarded as a matter of faith; for faith, belief, comes by hearing the word of God. If all would study and appreciate the difference between faith and opinion, and would be careful to always use these words according to their legitimate meaning, and never confound their meaning by using one when the other should be used, very much of the trouble and division that now exists in the religious world might be avoided.

Opinions are always more or less matters of ignorance. Those who form and express them do not and cannot know them to be true; for if these opinions were anywhere stated in the word of God,

then they would not be matters of opinion, but of faith, for we are required to believe what the word of God says. Hence, opinions should never be talked, taught, or argued as matters of faith. Men who hold and argue opinions are adding to the word of God. They lead people to accept and regard them as the word of God, when they are only the words of uninspired men.

Moses says: "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deut. 29: 29.) The "secret things" spoken of in this passage mean things not revealed to us. These all belong to the Lord, and not to us. We have no concern about such things, and nothing to do with them. If we knew every truth not revealed in the word of God, these would not save us. It takes the things that are revealed to save. So it is a loss to men to be spending time over things not revealed, not expressed in the oracles of God. Everything the Jews needed to know as to the service of God was given in the law, in the Old Testament, and could be known and understood by all who desired to know them, and they could have obeyed that law so as to become a prosperous and happy people. The law given through Moses was, indeed, the only thing that could have made the Jewish people prosperous and happy, and the only thing that could have made them obedient to God. He revealed to them plainly all that he wanted them to do, and nothing but that would have sufficed.

The Jews, however, were forever trying something else, but it always brought a curse upon them

instead of a blessing. If they could have known everything else in the world, except the law, and left that out, they still would have been condemned. They tried almost everything else within the range of their thoughts, and still they were condemned. Had they spent their time in learning and doing what was plainly written in the law, they would have been the most happy and prosperous people the world ever saw while it was in force. But, instead of that, they were forever doing things plainly condemned, or not revealed in any way, and were thus continually bringing condemnation on their own heads. We ought to see that, and take warning against following opinions instead of what is plainly written in the New Testament. All that God wants us to do is plainly written there. If we reject that, no matter what else we do, we are as sure to be condemned as the Jews were when they rejected the law and did something else.

The great foundation of human opinions in religion lies in the fact that so many people are not satisfied with the word of the Lord as it is. It takes so much self-denial and so much practical devotion to go to heaven, according to the word of the Lord, that people do not like to submit, and are trying continually to find some other way they think will do as well. Some brush the whole thing out of the way, and say: "There is no God." David says this is what "the fool hath said in his heart." According to this, there must be a good many fools in the world now, for there are many that say there is no God. One thing this claim does is to cut them loose from any responsibility to any power or being higher than themselves. But what

is this worth to them? Everybody in this Bible land knows that this claim makes people worse instead of better. It takes away all fear of retribution, of punishment here or hereafter, and leaves man as his own god and his own judge.

This breaks down the dominion of conscience, and leaves man to decide in and of himself what is right for him to do; and as to wrong, the idea that there is no God makes anything right a man wants to do. It destroys all idea of wrong and all responsibility for wrong, since there will be no one to administer punishment for wrongdoing hereafter, even if there is any such thing as wrong; and, besides, if there is no God, there is no hereafter for man, and no one there to be punished. There is nothing in the world in such an idea to make any one good, nor to hinder any one from doing anything he wants to do. Such an idea takes all the brakes off of conscience, so that it will not reprove us for anything, so far as eternity is concerned; for there is no eternity if there is no God—no eternal life, no eternal death. To deny God is to deny all truth, deny that man is anything but an animal, or that there is anything for man after death, any more than for a dog or a lion. Is there anything in such ideas to uplift man, to give him any aspirations to make anything more of himself in this life than a pig or a butterfly? There is something in believing in God and believing the word of God. It shows some design in the universe, some purpose in human life, something to stimulate aspiration and to lift man above the mere animal creation and to show himself worthy of existence. But suppose the idea is correct that there is no God,

what is gained by it that is worth anything? Simply nothing in the world. On the other hand, everybody would dwindle down to mere animal selfishness, in which might would make right, and love and mercy would soon be lost, and the world soon be full of demons in human form, and human life the greatest misfortune that could befall, and the world would soon be a scene of corruption and misery.

But everybody in Bible lands knows that society is made incomparably better, purer, and holier by believing and obeying the Bible, believing in God and all he says, than those who deny, or who have no knowledge of either God or the Bible can possibly be. So every influence for good that the Bible and the Christian religion accomplishes proves the falsity of the claim that there is no God. Such an idea is not only an absurdity, but a blight, a cloud of darkness that all the wisdom and intelligence of a thousand such worlds can never dissipate or remove. And, besides, if the infidel idea should turn out to be correct, the Christian will be just as well off at death as the infidel. But, on the other hand, if it be true that God exists, and that the Bible is true, then the unbeliever is doomed in eternity beyond the possibility of a doubt. So all advantages, both in time and in eternity, are with the man that believes and obeys the Bible. So if there were no God and no eternity for man, it is ten thousand times better in this life to believe and practice the Bible. The false and foolish idea, therefore, that there is no God cannot possibly bring any good to man in any sense in the wide world. It brings only evil, and that continually and for-

ever—and the greatest evil that could be imagined, at that.

The darkest, gloomiest, and most uncalled-for blight that has ever cast its murky clouds over this earth is surely the shriveling, pinching, awful blight of unbelief! To believe what the Bible plainly says about the creation of the heavens and the earth and of man, and the history of the human race; of the origin of sin, and of death on account of sin, also the ruin that sin is continually bringing upon man; and of the happiness, the elevation, the purity of heart and life that faith and obedience have always brought, is inspiring, uplifting, satisfying, encouraging, and consoling, beyond the power of tongue or pen to express. But the history of unbelief and unfaithfulness both to God and to man that the Bible records gives the darkest shading that disgraces every feature of the whole history of man on earth.

On the other hand, the brightest pages of the whole history of man are the accounts given of the men and women that believed in God and obeyed his word—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Moses, Caleb, and Joshua; Othniel, Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Samuel, and David, with a perfect host of others of Old Testament times, together with John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Paul, and a great number of others that we cannot name, whose beautiful and godly lives make the only true light that belongs to the picture of humanity on this earth. The man that lives in a land of Bibles, and who has had the advantages of Bible instruction and of the history of the Man of Galilee; what he has done for the redemption of man on earth; and, in spite of all this, still says there is no God, no Creator of

the heavens, the earth, and of man, and no hope for the future, is assuredly the darkest, most benighted and hopeless member of mankind that the world holds to-day; with scarcely a possibility that the dark mists and fogs of ignorance and folly that have settled down on him will ever be scattered so as to allow the bright light of heaven's truth ever to illumine his heart.

But there is another assumption, another ignorant and foolish opinion, that there is not a word of foundation for in the Bible, that is likely more dangerous to society than the one just presented. That is Universalism—the claim that all men will ultimately be holy and happy. It is more dangerous than avowed infidelity, in that Universalists claim the Bible teaches it. When a man advocates something that blots out God and Revelation and obliterates heaven and hell, the people are afraid of him and avoid him, and this hinders his influence; but when a man starts up a cranky notion, opinion, and proposes to prove it by the Bible, people will more readily listen to him, and this gives him a much better chance to deceive.

The claim, however, that the Bible teaches this absurd opinion is false. There is not a passage in that inspired volume that expresses or in any way teaches any such thing. Ask a Universalist to show you a passage that says all men will be ultimately holy and happy, or a passage that expresses that idea, and you silence him. There is no such passage. If there were, then you would have a palpable contradiction; for Jesus said of the wicked: "And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. 25: 46.)

This passage plainly declares eternal punishment for the wicked; and if a passage could be found that teaches in any language that all will ultimately be holy and happy, then you simply have a contradiction that could not be explained away, for in the passage quoted there is a double denial that all will be finally holy and happy. It not only says the wicked will go into eternal punishment; but in the same sentence there is another class, the righteous, and the righteous only, who shall go into eternal life. The same word, "eternal," expresses the duration of both the punishment of the wicked and the happiness of the righteous. So if the punishment of the wicked shall end, so will the happiness of the righteous. It is the same word in Greek, as in the above, that expresses the duration of both. Hence, if the punishment ends, so will happiness, so that there will no longer be happiness for them to enjoy. So this forever forbids the idea of any eternal happiness for the wicked; for if hell ends, so will heaven. Such an opinion, therefore, as an end of the punishment of the wicked is simply and only an ignorant, untaught opinion that contradicts very many as plain passages as there are in the Bible, and, if maintained, would destroy all credence in the Bible.

But it may be asked: "What is the danger in accepting and relying upon this opinion?" Simply this: Those who accept this opinion are not likely to deny themselves and faithfully live the Christian life as the word of God requires, and will not, therefore, be entitled to the promise of heaven, and will be lost, as will be the case with all who do not live the Christian life. Take away the fear of eternal

punishment, and in nine cases out of ten you destroy faithfulness in the Christian life, and this will certainly defeat eternal life. On the other hand, the Christian that holds out to the end will have nothing to lose, even if Universalism should turn out to be true. The faithful Christian is safe in any event. There is always safety in that. But if it turns out that Universalism is false, which is bound to be the case, since it flatly contradicts the word of God, then there is nothing left but for those who rely upon it to be lost. So all the importance of eternal life depends upon repudiating this ignorant and foolish opinion, and sticking to a practical, faithful, Christian life, and then there is nothing to fear. The danger, therefore, is to him that relies upon an opinion that contradicts the Son of God. On the one hand, God places the inducement of eternal life to win man's heart and life to his service. On the other hand, he places eternal ruin as the consequence of not doing the Lord's will. God knew that both these were necessary to be placed before men, or they would not have been so placed. The man, therefore, that in any way takes away the warnings that God has placed side by side with his precious promises, takes away from the word of God, and exposes himself to the very thing he denies, which is eternal punishment. To either take from or add to the word of God endangers the eternal interests and deprives him of the hope of eternal life.

People do not realize what they are risking when they take up these opinions, which are not only not found in the word of God, but actually contradict it. This opinion cannot possibly save any one; and

if any who hold it are saved, it will be because they do not teach it to others, but hold it entirely to themselves, and, on the other hand, faithfully serve the Lord in the gospel of Christ until death. What, therefore, is an opinion worth, that, if advocated, brings death because it misleads others, causing them to rely upon a false opinion as well as themselves? It is simply worth nothing in the world to any human being, as it cannot possibly save any one, and is in great danger of condemning all who embrace it. Those who espouse an opinion generally make a hobby of it and ride it to their death.

But these two assumptions are by no means all that are liable to endanger the eternal interests of men. Take creeds and confessions of faith, of which there are many, both written and unwritten, and all unauthorized. In all these creeds there are many things enjoined upon their adherents that are not found in the word of God, and, therefore, are things added to that word. They proceed upon the principle that the word of God is not sufficient for the government of the children of God, and that it is their right and their business to add, to ordain, what God has failed to furnish in his word. Take the Methodist Conferences as an example, of which they have five altogether, each differing from the others. These are the general, the annual, the district, the quarterly, and the church conferences. They are all held at different times and for different purposes. The specifications and directions as to the holding of these different conferences cover thirty pages in the "Discipline" of 1902, which is before me. There is not one word of authority for any one of these conferences, either as to name or

work. So all these thirty pages make just that much added to the word of God. In some of these conferences there is much legislating done, not a particle of which is authorized in the word of God. In fact, human legislation is the foundation of all creeds and of all denominational churches, from popery on down. The larger the creed, and the more legislation they have, the more thoroughly human they are.

The New Testament does not authorize human creeds nor denominational churches. These are all of human origin. Jesus built only one church, saying: "Upon this rock I will build my church." This church is called elsewhere "the church of God;" and when referring to more congregations than one, we have "churches of Christ." (Rom. 16: 16.) The one church of God and of Christ includes all on earth that have obeyed the gospel far enough to become Christians and are living faithfully the Christian life. These also compose the one church of God on earth, make up the one body of Christ. Christ has but one body, his loyal and obedient people. If denominational churches want to be the church of God, let them drop their human creeds and human names and all human legislation, and go back to their beginning and bring up whatever they lack of having obeyed Christ to the present time, and then go on and continue to serve God as the New Testament directs; then this much-desired end will be accomplished.

But it is astonishing how much would have to go if all in the Methodist "Discipline" were laid aside that is not found in the oracles of God. The thirty pages we have mentioned are only a few of

the things contained in that "Discipline," and made binding upon that church, that are not found in the word of God. The churches of God need none of these things, and they would get rid of an awful burden if they would throw them all away, and forever after and in all things live strictly as the word of the Lord requires. All the requirements made in the "Discipline" upon those people, that are not found in the word of God, make up that much that is added to the word of God. This will be a terrible load to carry to the judgment seat. Why not lay all such weights aside and cease to carry such extra burdens?

Now, if these people, carrying all these extra things, can get to heaven, there is no mistake about those getting there that simply take the word of God for their guide, do what it says, abstain from what it forbids, trust God's promises, and keep all this up to the end of life. People that are thus careful have the advantage of every other class of people in the world; for if it turns out that these humanisms are too weak to carry people to heaven, it will be awful for those who spend their lives trying to uphold them. But every one knows there is no danger to betide those that do the will of our Father in heaven, leaving out all human wisdom as service to God, either in the work or worship of the church.

Then, again, there are those that claim to take the word of God as their only rule of faith and practice, that build up humanly organized societies to sound out the word, that organize endeavor societies and ladies' aid societies to do other parts of the work of the church, till so many of the mem-

bers are absorbed in these different societies that there are scarcely any of the members that are doing anything simply and purely as Christians and in the name of Christ. Those that do not do the things God through Christ, said do, and because he said it, are not doing them in the name of Christ at all. They have taken matters out of his hands, and are doing things through and in the name of human societies, and not in the name of Christ, with no promise of getting a particle of credit for what they do from him, for they are not working by his authority. This society business is as purely human as the tower of Babel was.

Jeroboam and the ten tribes sacrificed and offered to God the same offerings that God ordered through Moses when they began their kingdom. But they offered to their golden calves, and not to God, because it suited their purposes better. The whole thing was idolatry, because they offered them by their own wisdom instead of by God's directions, so they could thereby accomplish their own ends, their own way. Those who build human societies through which to spread the gospel, instead of doing that in the Lord's way and simply as the Lord's people, worship an idol of their own devising as thoroughly as did the ten tribes when they worshiped the golden calves ordained by their own wisdom. Anything put into the work or worship of the church that takes the place of something God ordained is as much the principle of idolatry as was that of the ten tribes, and is as much a rejection of God as their calf worship was, and is taking things into men's own hands as much as they did, by adopting their opinions in place of God's will.

Let these society brethren, therefore, lay these societies, these golden calves, aside, and do the work as Christians, as the church of God, and then he will accept it; they will then be doing all these things through God's ordinance, the church, and in the name of Christ, and they will be blessed. But these foolish and ignorant human inventions must be refused and the work done the Lord's way. Besides, these worldly-wise societies gender strifes, contentions, and divisions; so they are doing endless mischief, and there is but one remedy. These societies are really human creeds that, like all other creeds, will breed strife and division as long as they last, and will lie as an incubus upon those that build them up and run them. Christians are positively commanded to lay all such things aside, to refuse them; and until they do it, they will be guilty before God.

David could never have taken the ark to Jerusalem if he had not thrown away his new cart and had the Levites to carry it. Let those who are free from these new carts see to it that they never take hold of them, nor of their heavy and dangerous responsibilities. There were no such things known in the days of the apostles, and the New Testament closed before any such things had appeared. Therefore, it is impossible to find one word of authority for these things. In fact, society people acknowledge there is no authority for them; they only claim them as a matter of religious liberty. Upon the principle that the tree is to be known by its fruits, the society is a bad tree, for there is scarcely any end to the divisions and strifes that have come up over it; and in many congrega-

tions where separation has not yet occurred, there is division of sentiment, contention, and sad trouble, and in these divisions are yet to come.

All these troubles are over human opinions, fads, and inventions of men, all of which are bound to come to naught, and somebody will be sure to be hurt when the crash comes. Those who remain loyal to Christ in all things have nothing to fear in the outcome. The suffering will be on the side of the disloyal. So, brethren, let us continue loyal and faithful to the end, and all will be well. Those who do this have every assurance that the word and the promises of God can possibly give that they will be forever safe. While those who play with human inventions may go down, those who remain firm in loyalty and faithfulness to Christ are certain to be gathered into the eternal home.

This advantage will remain with the faithful and true followers of the Lamb regarding every human fad, error, or invention of human wisdom that ever has been, or ever will be, made. The plain truth of God's word always has been, and always will be, safe ground. Every error that religious people get up or fall into makes their eternal destiny more and more uncertain, while there is the most perfect safety to all who govern their lives by the word of truth. It is so strange that people will take up mere opinions not given in the word of God, or inventions on which the word of God is known to be silent, and push and run them with even greater zeal and earnestness than they do the things they know are plainly expressed and required. They think more of and about these mere matters of opinion than they do of the commands concerning broth-

erly love, the Christian graces, or of the best members in the congregation, who chance to be opposed to their untaught opinions. They get to thinking more of these inventions than they do of love to Christ or the church. Surely they have an unaccountable infatuation for these outside things. May the Lord deliver us all from such delusions.

CHAPTER XX.

Woodland Street Christian Church.

It has been requested that, as I am putting some thoughts in book form to leave with those who may be interested in such things, some historical facts concerning the establishment of this church, its work, division, and its apostasy from the New Testament order of things, should be given.

On September 1, 1870, I moved, with my family, to 801 Boscobel Street, East Nashville, where some of us are living to this day, which is about thirty-eight years. This part of the city was then called "Edgefield," and had a separate corporation, but has long since become a part of the city. There were then but few finished streets or sidewalks, no street lights generally, no water pipes, and, in fact, scarcely any city conveniences, but many inconveniences. But it was a quiet, cheap place, and in many ways a pleasant place to live. We had cistern water, which is very hard to beat by any sort of water to be had anywhere. There was any amount of fine pasturage just across the street from us and round about us, and we could, with little expense, keep a cow and have plenty of milk and butter of our own, and could live in a comfortable, and yet economical, way. We were on the very outskirts of the town when we moved here, and in many ways it was as pleasant as country life.

But things have greatly changed in these nearly forty years we have lived here. The city has gone on far beyond us and left us up in town. We have now good streets and sidewalks, city water, gas, electric lights, street cars, a free bridge, and nearly all the conveniences of the average city. Then, also, as a result of a growing city, our pastures have been covered over with houses and yards and barns, and such things, and the city has ruled the cow an uncivilized creature, and has shut her out, unless owners keep her up all the time, or keep her in the hands of a shepherd, or herder. So, after losing a cow or two and having considerable trouble with the herding business, we decided to give up the cow as the least of the surrounding evils; but we still hold our ground in the same spot.

There was no congregation of disciples of Christ anywhere near us, and no special effort had ever been made to build up one in this part of the town. I have never been willing to attempt to rear a family without a congregation near, so they could always have a place where they could meet and worship on the first day of the week. There were a few members in this part of the town willing to undertake the work of building up a congregation. So in the first part of the year 1871 the Odd Fellows' Hall, an upstairs room, on Woodland Street, between Fourth and Fifth Streets, was rented, and we began meeting and worshipping there on the first day of every week, and started a Lord's-day school. We began this work in good earnest, determined to make a success of it if possible. There were only a few of us at the start, but we were in deep earnest. I had to be off preaching elsewhere most of the

time, but generally arranged to spend one Lord's day in the month with our little congregation, and was more frequently there at prayer meetings. Brother D. C. Hall, one of our charter members, was a good singer, and could lead in the regular worship, prayer meetings, and the Lord's-day school, so that these could all go on regularly whether I was present or not. He was as regular as a clock in the work, was in earnest, and had the confidence of every one that knew him.

The congregation gradually grew in numbers. Some members moved into our midst from time to time. Some were baptized occasionally from the Lord's-day school, protracted meetings were held frequently, and we were blessed with a regular and healthy growth. I never labored and prayed more earnestly for the success of Heaven's truth in the upbuilding of a congregation than for this one. I had never given so much time and labor, had never sacrificed so much in an effort to build up before, and seldom, if ever, saw a new congregation grow up more encouragingly than this.

During all the early years of this work—in fact, for nearly a dozen years—no open or direct effort was made to work any change in the New Testament order of things. I had never enjoyed any work in life more than I enjoyed this work, and had seldom been more strongly attached to any congregation. There were several considerations that made this work and sacrifice pleasant. One was an ardent desire for the conversion and salvation of souls, another was to have a church home convenient for the family, while still another was to do my own duty faithfully in the Lord's work. All

were continually encouraged and made happy by the continued good results. The brethren and sisters were faithful and worked with a will, and everything went on smoothly and in harmony. No one wanted to introduce anything not authorized by the word of God, and these considerations lightened every burden and made even sacrifices for truth's sake enjoyable. Everything then indicated that we would have a permanent and enjoyable religious home, in which the word of God would be the only rule of faith and practice.

These considerations always made me feel thankful when my turn came to be with the little band at home. Six years were very pleasantly spent without any financial support from this congregation, except a few individual gifts and a large lot of encouragement and good will. Then for the next two years this congregation, assisted by one or two others, sustained me to spend a considerable part of the time in laboring with and strengthening some weak congregations in the county, which resulted in considerable good being accomplished. Thus, while we were seeking to build ourselves up, we were also helping to build others up.

In the meantime, also, the brethren were trying to build a house of worship on Woodland Street, which they succeeded in doing by considerable assistance. Brother David Lipscomb, though not living among us and not meeting with us, except a few times when we first started, paid more than eleven hundred dollars toward it. So, by the end of eight years from the time we began meeting, the house was done and mostly paid for, and I was aided in doing outside work during the last two

years of this time, though the church was at the same time finishing the payments on the house. These things done, the brethren insisted that I should give more time to preaching in the home congregation, which was agreed to. During four years, therefore, I preached from two-thirds to three-fourths of the time in this house, and was remunerated reasonably well during all that time. The congregation continued to make gradual and healthy growth, and was, to all appearances, in peace and harmony.

But during the latter part of this time it began to be apparent that there was something wrong some way, though not a word had been uttered that I heard of. But a degree of indifference was evident that had not before been manifested, and especially so on Lord's-day nights, when the audiences began to fall much below what they had been. I talked about the matter and urged a better attendance, but to no effect. It was plainly manifest that they were losing zeal or that there was some dissatisfaction on some account. But not a word was said, nor even a hint to me, as to the cause of the falling off in attendance. Finally a few of the brethren came to see me to talk about means of improving the defect. They seemed to have nothing to suggest for improvement, but very deeply deplored the condition of affairs. I had already thought of suggesting a change in the preaching, and told them I had been thinking of a change, as I had not been able to improve the condition of things. They took to the idea in a moment, and soon asked if I would make the announcement right away, as the year was drawing to a close.

The whole thing was unexpected to me, and that night I scarcely slept any, thinking over the new phase of things, as it was to me then. They had been considering the society matter, but had not openly hinted the matter in any way to indicate that was what they meant. The whole thing was enigmatical. But the announcement was made, and they were glad. They had become satisfied, from the way I preached and enforced the word of the Lord, that they could never run in a society with me as their preacher. Later developments showed that they were quietly working to get me out of the way, so they would have a better opening to work up a society. They wanted a preacher that favored that sort of work, and that would aid them in bringing about that sort of movement. So when it was announced that I would cease to be their preacher at the end of that year, which was 1882, they began at once to find and secure a man to take the work.

In a short while, W. J. Loos, of Kentucky, was secured for the place, and was on hand and began work early in 1883. I soon had work arranged for, and was generally out of the city on Lord's days, but was generally at the prayer meetings, except when in protracted meetings. This gave better opportunities for them to arrange their plans toward building up a society. If I had left the city entirely when I quit preaching for them, it would have left them a clearer field; but they worked and planned as best they could, anyway. After Loos had been in the work for some months, he went up to Cincinnati to a big society convention, heard them tell of their work in their enthusiastic way, till he came back

to Woodland Street full of it. He told in glowing terms what they were doing up North, and that he felt ashamed that he was from Tennessee, where the churches were doing nothing. This has been the cry with them all the time, that the churches in this country are dead.

When I came home and heard what had been said, I brought it up at the very next prayer meeting, showed that facts had been misrepresented, and showed up some of the work the churches of this country were doing, and how they were doing it, expecting to bring on a discussion with him; but, to my utter surprise, he made not one word of response. So the thing just passed off that way, and I did not hear of his saying any more on the subject publicly during his stay with the church here, a even supposed he had dropped the matter, and that he was not trying any further to build up society work here, and had even heard that one of the elders had advised him to say no more. But later on I found out my mistake. He was doing his very best all the time, but managed to keep it hidden from me.

I have his own testimony to the truth of this later on, when the contest had become warmer. Some time after he had left here I published a statement in the Gospel Advocate to the effect that after the one time I have mentioned he had held his peace and had said no more about societies, and aimed the statement to be to his credit—that he did it for the sake of peace and harmony. Regarding this matter, we have the following from his own pen, over his own signature, in 1890:

“Dear Brother Sewell: In the Gospel Advocate of February 19, in your article, ‘Some Items of History,’ you make some reference to my work while preaching for the Woodland Street Church, in Nashville. There is one item of your account which I desire to correct, if you will kindly allow me the opportunity. In the first place, if I remember correctly, before attending the convention in Cincinnati, to which you refer, I preached upon the subject of foreign missions, took up a collection of nine dollars for the work, and put to the church a motion that it unite with the Church Street congregation in inviting the next general convention to Nashville, provided such an invitation should be extended by the Church Street congregation. The motion carried without opposition.

“I would also state that I have no recollection of any one of the elders, or any other member of the church, saying to me that it would not be best for me to speak of societies any more. I certainly did not act upon such a suggestion if it was made; for all the time I was at Nashville I kept the mission work before the Woodland Street Church, took up several collections for foreign and home missions, and preached upon these matters morning, night, and prayer meetings, publicly and privately, deeming it my duty so to do. I am confident the members of the congregation will bear me out in these statements. I cheerfully bear testimony that you opposed all these efforts on my part. Your public utterances at prayer meetings and on other occasions and in the pulpit were clearly and distinctly in opposition to any coöperation of the Woodland

Street Church with our missionary societies or conventions. If you will kindly publish this in the Advocate, you will greatly oblige.

“Very truly your brother in Christ,
“W. J. LOOS.”

This letter was published in the Advocate of March 5, 1890. It shows very clearly why the church was so anxious for a change of preachers, and at the same time shows why they selected a strong society man to take my place, and why they tried so hard to keep their movements hidden from me. They well knew I would oppose every step of that sort that should come to the surface. It also shows how unscrupulous Brother Loos was to come into a congregation that had been working for twelve years in peace and harmony and go to work deliberately and knowingly to drive a wedge to split the congregation, which he knew would be the result if he succeeded with his society movement. Yet he was willing to do that for the sake of a mere human invention. He knew there was not a word in the Bible in favor of such societies. He knew that some of us had labored and sacrificed time and money for years and years to build up a congregation and to secure a neat, comfortable, and permanent house to worship in, and have it all paid for; and yet, for the sake of human inventions, he was willing to go to work and help to do all that mischief.

With some of the rest of us here it was very different. Our homes and our earthly interests were here, and we were working to build up something for a lifetime and for future generations; and,

besides, we were building just as we read it in the New Testament, as given by the Holy Spirit, and he never made an effort to show that a single step of our work was unscriptural. Yet he worked day and night for three years or more, upsetting it all to make room for nothing but a human invention that works evil wherever it goes. Then, just as soon as his time was up here, he was off somewhere else, and was seen here no more, while the rest of us that remained here tried to get rid of the mischief done as best we could.

This sort of work was never ordained of God, and is utterly out of harmony with the Spirit of Christ and the whole of the New Testament. The foundation of this trouble was in the fact that there were some members that were from other States, who, doubtless, had been under society influence, had been with society preachers and learned to love their broad, worldly-wise ways, and had never become willing to familiarize themselves with the way things were done in this country. This was especially true with the society part of the congregation. So we were encouraging and caring for some that were laying the foundation for the sad things that broke like a tornado upon us after a while.

Congregations can never be too careful in guarding against all appearances of things that are evil. We had never had things of that sort to contend with before, and did not know how to guard against them; nor had we ever been forced to contend with preachers so out of harmony with the word of God as some we had to deal with in the history of this church. But these things thus far detailed were but the beginning of our sorrows.

Another thing that was a surprise to me was that half of the elders, whose business it was to be guardians of the flock, and to keep down factions and heresies and heretics, and all such like enemies to the truth, and protect the church from them, were among the very first to defend the society movement. Paul told the elders of the church at Ephesus that they were the overseers of the church, and they must feed and care for the flock. He also told them that of themselves some would turn out to be perverse.

There has been some discussion lately among the brethren as to the propriety of a restrictive clause in the deeds for ground for meetinghouses. Some contend that the very things you want to prevent ought to be expressed, such as missionary societies and instrumental music, and that all these should be prohibited. Others claim that nothing of the sort should be named in the deed, but that it would be sufficient to say that "nothing shall be used not authorized in the word of God," and that the elders should see to it that nothing shall come in not authorized. This sort of clause would not be worth the paper it was written on, unless the elders are truly reliable, godly men. We had four elders in Woodland Street Church, and they were about the best material we had at the time they were appointed. But from the very incipency of the society movement in that church, two of the elders were among its most ardent supporters. They not only did nothing to stop Loos from his divisive work, but helped him and encouraged him all the time, and stood by him in it. This shows at once how futile it would be to simply say nothing un-

scriptural shall be used in the house, unless you could know the church owning and occupying the house would always have just the right sort of elders, and this no church can ever know beforehand. Hence, that sort of clause counts nothing. To specify the objectionable things may not always prevent them, but the chances are at least ten to one that it will. One of our Woodland Street elders, who knew more about the Bible than any other member in it, save one, perhaps, contended stoutly from the start for the society with unabated zeal. So, from my experience in this case, I am led to conclude the generality of elders are not much reliance in such cases.

Of course we could not be much astonished at women wanting to run off with such things, when old, well-informed men rush into them. We are sure we never saw those two elders more deeply in earnest over any matter that ever came before them than they were over the society matter that caused so much trouble among us. And then, again, I suppose we need not be much surprised at elders going off that way, when preachers who have been preaching for years, as W. J. Loos, whose father was a preacher before him, should get so stirred up over the same thing in connection with the elders as to work day and night, as he says he did, to help the elders and the sisters work up that human invention. Surely humanity is frail and unreliable. All can begin to see from these things the trouble we had to encounter in this society movement from the prominence of the persons leading in the movement. It is astonishing how errors will run when they get started, and how many men

in high places will fall into the rushing tide. If those elders had turned their energies and talents to enforce the word of the Lord just as the Holy Spirit gave it, instead of human opinions, what a grand work they would have done, and how different the results would have been!

The leading elder frequently spoke of wanting "a man of culture," when they were considering the matter of employing a preacher. I could not realize what he meant by it, as we had in our State college graduates and men who understood well the common amenities of society and good behavior and general politeness, and all that; and the question then was: What does he mean by "a man of culture?" I think I now understand it better. When a man becomes wedded to certain opinions, the greatest, the most cultured man, in his estimation, is the man that most readily agrees with him in his opinions, and who will help him in carrying them out. W. J. Loos filled the bill in this case. He did not use the Bible extensively, anyway. The most that some preachers need the Bible for is to furnish them plenty of texts to preach from. Then they can make up a sermon in the way of a moral lecture or talk, which, as a rule, does not conflict with any one's faith or opinions. His opinion fully accorded with that of the two elders and the leading sisters, who were prominent in the movement, and he was exceedingly careful not to present anything that could in any wise conflict with their mutual opinions. He did not use the Bible to deduce a practical system of service from it. The practical work and worship of the church as the apostles gave them were not dwelt on much. In these

matters I did not suit them. I tried always to obey the command, "Preach the word;" and when anything began to crop out that in any way conflicted with the word of God, the very first opportunity I had I would show the very passage violated. This was what led Brother Loos to think that I was so very busy in utilizing all opportunities to oppose any sort of coöperation by Woodland Street Church with the societies. In this he was not so very far wrong, except in the fact that I was not as constantly at it as he intimates, for they worked so thoroughly behind the curtain that it was only occasionally that I could get an opportunity. Whenever one was presented, I made it a point never to let it slip unused. These were only semioccasional, however. I never had but one square hit at Brother Loos while here, though he shows he was continually at work for the society—and, it seemed, continually working to hide the fact that he was striving with might and main to do a work that broke up the peace and harmony of our congregation.

If he had been working to build up something the word of God plainly requires, then God would have approved of his work, though we had all been against it; and if division had come, then it would have been our fault. But as he and the elders were working for something not only not required, but subversive of something the Lord really does require, they were guilty of causing division, and that by pressing an untaught opinion. As much trouble as we had over the matter, I would a thousand times rather take the chances of those who firmly stood upon the word of truth and opposed the innova-

tions than the chances of those that forced in the human opinions. However much they may have thought they were doing right, they were not doing what the word of the Lord says do.

CHAPTER XXI.

More About the Preachers and the Division of Woodland Street Church.

When W. J. Loos left Woodland Street Church, the next preacher was R. M. Giddens. He, like Loos, was an entire stranger when he came. He was not personally known by any of the church, and he did not know any of us. He had no personal interests to bind him here for a single day beyond the expiration of his time of service. As a preacher, he was not one of the best; but in some ways he was an affable, pleasant sort of man.

Any congregation runs a great risk for its future to employ an entire stranger and give the running of its spiritual interests into his hands. As one item of his qualification, Giddens was a full and radical believer in missionary societies. As another qualification, he was exceedingly careful never to preach upon any passages of scripture that could be construed against societies. In fact, he did not use the Scriptures much, as he did not need them to prove opinions. I was absent when he was engaged, and, of course, had nothing to say either for or against it. Even if I had been there, I knew nothing about him, anyway. Besides, I had to leave it with the rest of the elders to employ a preacher, as I was nearly all of my time absent or very busy in other work. There was one of

those elders that could have surpassed Giddens any day he was there as a Bible teacher; but they wanted him for this one end of building up a society. That one idea prevailed, and he remained there quite a while.

As an illustration of the work of the preacher and the elders, we give the following from Brother Lipscomb, in the *Gospel Advocate* of 1890, page 119:

"In our notice of Brother Myhr's proposed work, the word 'not' got in where it did not belong. We aimed to say the other elders employed Brother Myhr, 'concealing it from Brother Sewell.' The word 'not' getting in made us say just the opposite of what we aimed to say. They concealed the action, as Brother Giddens said, purposely from Brother Sewell, as they did from every member of the church that is not in favor of the societies. Yet they have protested all the time that they were not aiming to form a society. They claim it as a church work, yet it was never considered by the elders and deacons in a meeting, and no minute of the agreement and purpose was ever entered in the church record. It was never laid before the church. The secretary of the church was kept in ignorance of the action taken. So it is not an action of the eldership. Brother Sewell was chosen in conjunction with the other three elders and the deacons to guide the affairs of the church. No one of these elders would think to treat a business associate as they treated Brother Sewell. Such treatment would not be tolerated among gentlemen of the world. It is a matter of deep regret that elders of the church should so treat one another, especially one who had built up this church. After writing the above,

Brother Giddens wishes it said that he failed to consult Brother Sewell about the employing of Brother Myhr because he had refused to indorse his first work.

“It is the right of every member of a congregation to know and to be heard in every work undertaken by that congregation. The elders are not to rule by arbitrary authority, as lords over God’s heritage; but in all matters it is their duty to let every act of the congregation be known to all and to satisfy every one of the rightness of the proposed action, and to hear every man’s objections and seek to remove them, and so lead them as ensamples to the flock, so that all may be united in one mind and one judgment, and may as one body all work harmoniously and heartily to the same end.

“This is no exceptional case of their treatment of Brother Sewell. When he was preaching for them, this same faction complained and found fault with him until he gave up the work. The ground of the fault-finding was not at his preaching, not on account of his inability as a teacher of the gospel or his lack of speaking ability. No one could claim either of those who followed him to be his equal in either respect. The objection was that he did not go into these progressive ways. The only distinct charge made against him, that I recollect, was that he persisted in calling the house in which they worshiped the ‘meetinghouse’ instead of the ‘church.’ It was proscription, simply and only because he proposed to stand to the Bible.

“They have pursued the same course toward others. Brother McQuiddy has never been asked to preach, seldom to take the slightest part in the wor-

ship. Recently it was proposed to put Brother McQuiddy into the eldership. It was objected to, they said, not because of any fault of character. He was not in favor of the societies explains the trouble. Some say now that he is not old enough. He is old enough to have done a hundredfold more for the church than the whole eldership combined, leaving out Brother Sewell. Experience and devotion to the cause of God are the qualities needed. It is simply a war upon those who propose to stand by the Bible and the integrity of the churches as God gave them. The work as inaugurated involves all the vicious elements of the society, without even its redeeming features. We understand that there was no money raised by the festivals which went into this fund. We were careful not to say there was, because we did not know. But these self-elected directors of the funds and preachers of the State held, or sanctioned the holding of, festivals to raise money for religious purposes. We mentioned it because it is our duty to let the brethren know the religious character of those who ask so great a trust at their hands."

While Brother Lipscomb was not with us, he knew how things were going at that time in Woodland Street Church, knew what a one-sided procedure the whole thing was, and was always ready to defend the truth. I have never felt that anything I ever met in life was a greater departure from the church of the New Testament and its practice than the State Missionary Society built up by the Woodland Street Church and its preachers. As an illustration of the kind of arguments I used against such innovations as missionary societies, I insert

the following from the Gospel Advocate of 1889, page 295, under the heading, "More on the Lord's Plan:"

"First, we have shown in preceding articles that at the very beginning of the fully established state of the church of God a system of finances was established by the teaching of the apostles under the guidance of the Spirit of God. When the three thousand were added, they continued 'in the apostles' teaching,' as the word of the Lord puts it. As one item of their continuance in the teaching, they contributed freely of their means to supply the needs of all the disciples. We showed, further, that the congregation at Antioch, the one at Corinth, and those of Macedonia and Galatia, all of them—and that, too, by the teaching of the apostles—practiced the same way. They were taught to contribute on the first day of the week as they were prospered, and in this way, as churches, they assisted the poor and sustained preachers. This presents a financial system which is ample for all purposes of the church of God, and is divine. The question, therefore, that remains is: Shall we practice what the Lord has ordained, or shall we reject him in these matters, and set up for ourselves, and act upon human wisdom rather than divine wisdom?

"Societies are all human, as everybody knows. Brother Giddens has settled this question by saying that the Lord has not revealed any plan for spreading the gospel. If this be true, then it is certain that the Lord never ordained the societies. Shall we, therefore, turn away from what God has ordained, and which is plainly expressed in the word of God, and take up a human invention and practice

upon that? Brother Giddens knows, and has already acknowledged, that in urging the members of the congregation to which he is preaching to work in the society and through societies, he is urging them to work in and through human appointments. He knows, moreover, that in urging and pushing societies and society work of human origin, he is pushing something about which the brethren are divided in sentiment, and that discord and unpleasant feelings are engendered thereby; and, moreover, he knows that all can work on the plan the Lord presents in the New Testament, and which we have plainly pointed out as given in the word of the Lord, without any compunctions of conscience whatever. And since all, therefore, can work in harmony in this way, and whereas harmony is impossible on any humanly devised plan, then, in reason's name, why not practice upon the plan we read in the New Testament? Are men wiser than God, that they can devise a better plan than he? There is no excuse for men to set aside the Lord's plan and devise one of their own, unless it can be shown that men can devise a better one than God has, and, also, that God will accept it at their hands in place of his own appointment. When men by their wisdom do invent something that, in their judgment, is wiser and better than that which the Lord has ordained, then what assurance can they have that the Lord will accept either it or them?

"Nadab and Abihu, no doubt, thought they had found a wiser and better way than the Lord had ordained when they offered strange fire in burning their incense. But the Lord refused and destroyed both it and them. The result, therefore, in that

case, of rejecting what the Lord appointed and introducing one of their own, was fearful in the extreme. What evidence have men that the same sort of thing will result any better now? When David attempted to carry the ark of God on a new cart, he thought he was doing a good thing. (See 2 Sam. 6.) But he made a complete failure, and one of his leading men lost his life in the effort, and the ark was left at the house of Obed-edom on the way.

"He then studied and found out the Lord had ordained the manner of carrying the ark, and that he had ordained a plan of his own. So the next time he attempted to carry it he took the Lord's plan for it. He found that the Lord appointed that the Levites should bear it upon their shoulders. Hence, the next time he said: 'None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him forever.' (1 Chron. 15: 2.) He now starts out to follow the Lord's plan instead of his own. He, therefore; called up the priests and Levites, 'and said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order.' (1 Chron. 15: 12, 13.)

"David had found out he had been acting upon his own wisdom, and that that was the cause of his failure. He found out that the Lord had made a breach upon them because they sought him not after the due order, not as the Lord appointed,

and he had the humility and magnanimity of soul to confess his mistake, and then set out with all the earnestness of his soul to do as the Lord had said; and this time they went into the city in triumph, without let or hindrance, with the ark upon the shoulders of the Levites, just as God ordained that it should be done. The trouble in the outset with David was, not that his desire was not good to serve the Lord, but that he went at it his own way instead of doing it as the Lord had ordained.

"The Lord had in plain words expressed now the ark should be carried from one place to another. Hence, in 1 Chron. 15: 15, we have: 'And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the Lord.' Read Num. 4, and there you will find the law laid down. If God had commanded them to move the ark from one place to another, and had not told them how to do it, then David could have chosen his own way of moving it. His new cart would then have been in place. But as God had plainly told the Jewish people through Moses how the ark should be borne, it was rebellion for David to set that aside and take his new cart; and for this very reason he said the Lord made a breach upon them.

"Now we have shown in the very language of the Lord's word in the New Testament that the Lord has given a financial system, and that the congregations of apostolic times acted upon it, used it, both in relieving the poor, the needy, and in sustaining preachers. This being true, every man that turns away from this plan as revealed in the New

Testament and takes a human plan, as a missionary society, does precisely the same sort of thing that David did when, instead of having the Levites to bear the ark upon their shoulders, he undertook to carry it upon a new cart of his own devising. To bear the ark upon a new cart was a human invention; to bear it upon the shoulders of the Levites was the Lord's plan. God rejected the human, but accepted the divine one. Even so has the Lord ordained that congregations shall contribute of their means on the first day of the week as they are prospered. With the means thus raised by the congregations the poor were fed and preachers sustained, both at home and abroad. When churches do that way now, they are doing just as the Lord devised and expressed in his word.

"When they refuse that, and work through a society which is of human wisdom, they as certainly make a new cart as David did, and as certainly dishonor God thereby as did David. Therefore, every time Brother Giddens advises and urges his brethren to work through these human societies instead of working simply as a congregation, as the Lord has ordained, he is working away on a new cart, just as David did; and just as David led his people astray and brought trouble upon them, so Brother Giddens is leading his people astray and bringing them into trouble.

"Very few things are more dangerous or more thoroughly denounced in the word of God than to set aside the appointments of God and substitute human wisdom in their place. The man that does it is guilty of two great wrongs. One is putting man's wisdom in place of God's, and the other is in

causing divisions and discord among brethren by pushing an invention of men into the place of the Lord's appointments as a means of doing the Lord's work. It is impossible for all to agree upon a human appointment; but all can agree upon what the Lord has ordained and plainly expressed in his word. Peace and harmony among brethren are worth more than all the human inventions the world ever saw. No congregation can prosper without it. The success of the restoration movement from the beginning has been largely due to the fact that, until of late years, all were a unit upon the claim that the word of God is an all-sufficient guide in all matters of faith and practice, and all acted upon it; and so long as this was their guiding star, they were invincible, and error fell before them on every hand; while truth triumphed most astonishingly, and peace and harmony reigned on every hand. O, for a return to those good old ways!"

Much of this, in substance, was also preached in the Woodland Street Church while the conflict was on, as opportunity afforded, as well as in the *Advocate*, but was never replied to, either by elders or preacher.

As another item showing how the State society originated, we insert the following from A. I. Myhr, in the *Tennessee Missionary*, June, 1906, pages 13 to 15:

"After a meeting held by the writer in Woodland Street Church, Nashville, in October, 1887, by the advice and coöperation of R. M. Giddens, some of the sisters organized a Home Mission Band. The spirit of missions was thus developed. These women saw the need for aggressive effort in preach-

ing the gospel to the unsaved in Tennessee. They determined to invite others to help them, and, therefore, addressed a half hundred letters to the elders of as many congregations. These letters stated the purpose of the effort, and asked for help to put an evangelist in the field.

"The only response was from the ladies of the Christian Church in Chattanooga. Two years were spent in working, praying, and planning. These women believed there was a brighter day coming for the Christian Church in Tennessee. In October, 1889, they invited the writer to spend a month among the churches, presenting the purpose and plan of missions. This he did, and reported: 'There is a great opportunity for work in Tennessee, and the churches will contribute for missions \$2,500 to \$3,000 annually.' . . .

"With the beginning of the year 1890 the sisters asked the elders of Woodland Street Christian Church to take charge of the work. Brothers Hall, Farrar, and Corbin accepted the trust, and called A. I. Myhr, of Missouri, to act as State evangelist. He accepted, and began the work on February 1, 1890."

This extract shows very clearly the origin of the society in Tennessee, and by whom it was started. Giddens and the elders encouraged these sisters all the time in the work they were engaged in, in building up the society. Although they were assuming prerogatives the Lord never placed in the hands of women, yet we are satisfied Giddens and the elders encouraged them in it from the start. This is something wholly unheard of in the New Testament. In not one single church of the New Testament did even the elders propose to take charge of

other churches or their money; and yet these women attempted it, actually writing to the elders of fifty churches, asking them to send money to the president of their society, or band, for the purpose of sending out an evangelist. This is another step that was taken without the knowledge of those they knew were opposed to their society. We never dreamed of such a thing till brethren began to write letters to the editors of the *Advocate*, inquiring what it meant and who those women were. The three elders, says Myhr, received the work at the hands of the women, and took charge of it.

We give these things that the reader may see the origin of the State work that has already caused, and is still causing, so much trouble, and is making so many hearts ache. It would be impossible for me to tell how many sad moments I spent, or how many perplexing enigmas I was called upon to solve, during those weary years.

Could we have seen and realized the movement then as we have seen it since, matters would have been brought to a head much sooner than they were. I do not mean that we would have stopped these people from their purpose or would have prevented their building a society. When people set their heads to go wrong, God lets them go. So they would likely have gone on and built a society, but we might have caused them to seek quarters elsewhere than in the house that was built for other purposes; for several of us had given liberally of our means toward the house who would not have given anything had we known how it was to be used. Brother Lipscomb and I had given nearly fifteen hundred dollars on the house, while others

had given considerable that they would not have given if they had known it would be used as it has been for nearly twenty years, without a cent ever being refunded. We had never seen a society of that sort built up, and had no conception of the steps people will take, or how they will impose upon others, or how unscrupulous they will be to accomplish an end. Then, to think that all this trouble should be raised to build up a human invention, something not found in the word of God. The end of such work is to drive out all that oppose them and cause a great many unsuspecting ones to go into the wrong who would not have done so if it had not been almost forced upon them. Leading the unsuspecting into sin is awful.

In this chapter, also, we want to enlarge a little on Myhr's statement that the sisters asked him to spend a month traveling among the churches to raise money to preach the gospel among the destitute. It is also a fact that for some time the sisters had been raising money, claiming it was intended by them to preach the gospel to the destitute—that the churches in Tennessee were dead, and that the people were dying all around without the bread of life. So, at the time they employed A. I. Myhr, they must have had enough money to hold at least two or three protracted meetings at the rate protracted meetings were generally paid for in those days. They paid Myhr for that work a hundred and twenty-five dollars a month and traveling expenses, so we understood. So, instead of using the money they raised to preach the gospel to destitute people, they used it to raise more money to preach more gospel to more destitute people!

Myhr also says of this society: "To preach the gospel in the many destitute fields in Tennessee was, and is, the supreme aim of this work." If that really was the supreme purpose, why did they not hold a few meetings while they had money in hand to do it? He reported a good round sum of money could be forthcoming among the churches for this grand purpose; but still no meetings were held in destitute places by this society in this country then, nor have there been such held to this day, so far as I have been able to learn. I was satisfied then, and am still satisfied, that if there were no scriptural wrongs in having such societies, they are a dead weight upon the churches and a positive hindrance to the spread of the glorious gospel of Christ in this or any other country.

This of itself would be reason enough to oppose them. But the hardest work a man ever attempted to do is when the thing he is trying to oppose is hidden from him and he does not know just where to direct his efforts. When men will show their errors so you can see them full size, you can see then what scriptures are violated by them, and can tell what passages you need to use, and in what form to put them. But when you have an enemy that poses as a friend, while in reality he is tearing down your hard labor for many toilsome years, you are in a very disagreeable tangle. This was just my trouble for a long time at Woodland Street Church; for they positively denied having any intention of building a society till some time after the Chattanooga Convention in 1890, still saying that it was a State work, not a society.

CHAPTER XXII.

Closing Chapter on Woodland Street Church.

This history must of necessity be brief, for want of space to make a full presentation of things. But we will now give some further items regarding R. M. Giddens, A. I. Myhr, and the elders.

Myhr was never here till after Giddens had made arrangements for him to hold a meeting at Woodland Street Church. We heard him several times in that meeting, but did not hear him say anything about societies, nor anything else of a divisive nature. Had he done nothing more than was in his preaching in that meeting, there would have been no trouble over it. But they do not do their work by public preaching; the mischief is always done in private, where they can lay their plans, train their forces, and get things ready for development, ready to put the machinery into operation, before the opposition can see how to throw obstacles in the way. They knew all their efforts would be defeated if they were to openly make known their purpose from the start. Hence, we did not hear Giddens say anything publicly in favor of the society till they were almost ready to start it. This is the way people generally do when they want to start something that will be warmly opposed. The first decisive public statement they made of the matter was when they announced the Chattanooga

Convention. Up to this time they kept their plans to themselves; but that they were constantly at work consulting, planning, and working toward that one end, future developments fully demonstrated, and their success in their efforts was fully manifested when that convention launched the society.

It was while these plans were thus maturing that we had our dark days of suspense and trial, not knowing what was coming, except as their movements cast their shadows before them. All the while, however, the conflicts were growing more frequent and more intensely earnest and pointed. R. M. Giddens, the elders, and the society members were more active, and gradually became more aggressive, while the opposition was equally wide-awake and quite as deeply in earnest. When we made complaint about the writing of those letters by the sisters to the elders of churches elsewhere, one of the elders said to me: "You had better be careful how you interfere with those women in their mission; they are doing a grand work." This indicated to me that these elders had prompted and encouraged the women, and were themselves in it. He showed earnestness in the manner in which he said it, and showed that he felt his efforts were being interfered with. I had never before known women in the churches of Christ to assume any such prerogatives, and knew that the whole thing was contrary to the word of God.

At another time, in a business meeting, when Brother Giddens was introducing something which I did not believe in and against which I was throwing objections, the other one of the two elders who

were especially helping the women, in order to stop the discussion, said: "Brother Hall, read Ps. 133." And I said: "All right, read it." We here give the first verse of it: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

When the reading was ended, I said: "Yes, that is all very nice; and you very well know we have dwelt together in unity from the very beginning of this congregation until now, and you also know that it is the effort to introduce something into the congregation that never was in it before, that is causing the disturbance now; and you know, moreover, that the something you all are trying to introduce is not found in the Bible, and that is the foundation of the whole trouble. So now cease to push this matter, and the trouble will cease at once."

This brought silence. He knew that what I had said was true, and saw very plainly that if he would put a stop to the untaught society matter, we could be in unity again. So he said no more about it. He was not yet ready to own that they were working for a society, and knew that further discussion of the matter would develop that fact. So he preferred silence. These were the sort of difficulties we had to labor under. If they had come right out and said, "Yes, we intend to put in a society here," we would have known what we had to meet; but we had to work in the dark, not knowing what was to come next. To have such trials and troubles with people we had learned to love so well was no small matter. But I was determined not to allow anything to hinder me from opposing any unscriptural move that might be made.

As they made it more and more apparent that they meant to put in a society, our little contentions became more lively, and they were more and more annoyed by the frequent demands for Bible authority, when they knew they had none to give. Frequently did I say to Brother Giddens: "You know the Bible does not require any such societies, and that this congregation was built up in peace without them, but cannot have peace with them. Why, then, do you wish to thrust one in at the expense of peace and harmony?" But he never attempted one time to prove they were right by the word of God.

Frequently he would say the churches in Tennessee were dead, were doing nothing. But I said: "There are churches all over this country, and no society. How, then, came these churches into existence? You know societies did not build them, for there were none here. Whence came they, then?" To such questions he never attempted to reply. Once, when he said that churches in Tennessee were all dead, were doing nothing, I said: "Here is Woodland Street Church, with a lot of earnest members, and they are paying you twelve hundred dollars a year. Is it dead, and yet doing all this work? And if there is nothing doing here, how came this church and others into existence?" Yet he went right on with his objectionable work of trying to get up a society, and nothing could stop him. Just think of a man exerting all his powers to divide the very church that was sustaining him! Some of us were six years or more building it up by voluntary work, but he was getting twelve hundred dollars a year to tear it down.

In the fall of 1889, when Brother Myhr was to start out among the churches to stir up an interest in missions and to raise money to preach the gospel to the destitute, he and Giddens went round among the elders to get them to sign a letter of commendation for Myhr to the churches. They came to me last, having secured the signatures of all the elders, except me. I told them that their movement looked very much like an effort to build up a society. They said: "No, we are not going to build up a society; we only want to get up money to preach the gospel in destitute places." I said: "It looks too much like a society for me to sign your letter. I cannot afford to put my name to anything that looks as much like a society movement as that." There seemed to be no end to the trials and the troubles we had in trying to oppose an innovation that was gradually creeping upon us.

Further, when they had forced in their society in their convention in Chattanooga, of which the three elders and Giddens and Myhr had charge, I wrote a petition to the elders and Giddens, setting forth that the church had been built up and run in harmony without any society, and could still run in harmony without one, but could not run in harmony with it; that they knew nothing of the sort could be found in the New Testament. I added, also, this earnest request: "Will you not, therefore, for the sake of peace and harmony, lay aside this State work?" This petition, with more than forty names of the members to it, was sent to these elders and their preacher for their action. They soon sent back the reply that they could not lay aside the State work, thus showing very clearly

that they thought more of the society than they did of the members that opposed it.

Paul says: "But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Rom. 8: 9.) People that are actuated by the Spirit of Christ cannot, and will not, do such things. Paul says, again: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Col. 3: 17.) To do anything in the name of Christ is to do it by his authority, and to do it by his authority is to do it by his word. Whatever, therefore, the word of God requires to be done can be done in the name of Christ. The word of God does not authorize State work by a missionary society; hence, Christians cannot build up and operate one in the name of Christ, nor can they operate such a thing in the spirit of Christ. Christ, therefore, has nothing to do with anything that can neither be done by his authority nor in his spirit.

People that act thus also prove plainly that they do not love Christ; for Jesus himself says: "If a man love me, he will keep my word." (John 14: 23.) If such men loved Christ, they would love his word, and would obey it, and would never allow anything of human wisdom to displace the word of God, nor would they allow anything unauthorized by the word of the Lord to enter in and divide the church, and engender strife, confusion, and alienation of hearts among brethren. Hence, those elders and those preachers that forced an innovation of human wisdom upon the church and divided it proved that they did not have scriptural love for Christ; neither had they scriptural love for the

brethren. John says: "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes." (1 John 2: 9-11.) Then, he that loves his brother abides in the light. In other words, he abides in the word of the Lord, which imparts light, is itself light. And upon the principle that "love works no ill to his neighbor," the man that loves his brother cannot, and will not, deliberately run worldly institutions into the church, and thereby drive him out; for when they force these things into the church, they force all to be parties to the innovation or to get out. Therefore, those that do these things are in darkness, and walk in darkness—that is, they are in error, and walk in error, in the ways of the world.

No man that knows the truth and loves the truth can be content to remain where the truth is trampled upon. If he does, he is encouraging the error, and is himself a partaker of their sins. We gave them every chance possible to treat us as the gospel requires, but all to no effect. They showed in every way that they loved their man-made society more than their brethren and sisters that opposed them. So there was nothing left us but to walk out, or stay there and violate our conscientious convictions of truth and duty. So several of us ceased to meet with them any more, or to recognize them as in any way entitled to the appellation, "a church of Christ."

So here was a separation. But what sort of a separation was it? Was it really a division of the church, so that the part of it which went away and the part of it that remained each constituted a part of the church? Moses, by one violation of the word of God, caused himself to be shut out of the promised land. These people sinned against God by adopting a human invention to displace and take the place of the church, to do a work God intended the church to do. They sinned against their brethren in thus driving them from their midst by introducing a human innovation into the church and making it so their brethren could not remain among them without encouraging the wrong. With these facts before us, it is hard to conclude that they can remain a church of Christ and still carry these errors. So we think it not too much to conclude that the church went out and a faction remained. That they were factional, there cannot be a doubt. They became heretics by introducing into the church a society unknown to the oracles of God and causing division. Jesus also says: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away." This means every one that does not bear the fruit the word of God requires. It is self-evident that these people were not bearing the fruit required in the word of God when they drove out their brethren by forcing untaught things upon them. I do not, therefore, see how, from any standpoint, we can regard such as a church of Christ. At all events, I would not drive out good brethren by pushing human inventions into the church for the wealth of the whole world. There are, doubtless, very many factional bodies of people on earth that are posing

as churches of Christ and demanding all the considerations that are due genuine New Testament churches. If we could have recognized that those people were a church of Christ in what they were doing, we certainly would not have stepped out and left them.

Another fact that shows the troubles R. M. Giddens had on account of some of the older members of the church, who were in his way, cropped out in one of his sermons in the closing part of the conflict over the society, and that settled matters at once with some of the members, for they quit attending from the deliverance of that sermon. His text on that occasion was: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." (John 12: 24.) He dwelt but little on the figure of the grain of wheat that is sown and dies in reproduction, multiplying itself many times thereby. But he seemed to be disturbed over the idea of old people becoming fossilized, who not only do not advance any themselves, but are in the way of others; saying, if such would die and go home to glory, it would be a great blessing. That was before Osler said that a man that lived to be sixty ought to be chloroformed, and, therefore, he was not quoting from him.

One of the saddest things in the whole matter is the mental and heart disturbance that such a thing causes among the members. Those that oppose such things are misrepresented and slandered; they are provoked, grieved, perplexed, and tempted to say and do things they ought not, and especially in an improper spirit and temper. They realize

that it is their duty to defend the truth and help to defend other brethren who love the truth and want to remain with the truth. And when you have worked hard for many long years to aid in building up a congregation as the word of God directs, it is hard to see strangers undermining and destroying the work of years, and breaking up the religious home you had hoped to have for your family for life; and to know at the same time that there is not a shadow of authority in the word of God for what these men are trying to put in. For brethren and sisters in whom you have had such confidence—to help tear down the principles you had so long labored and prayed to build up, is a thing upon which no man can look but with feelings of sadness. We could hardly imagine a greater calamity to befall any one; yet this is the ordeal that a number of us had to pass through.

But we passed through without allowing our faith to be in the least shaken in the word of God. We must admit, however, that our faith in humanity went down several degrees when we saw people whom we had thought incapable of such things rush with such recklessness into such a work of division, with such disregard for their brethren and sisters in Christ. But we did not stop long to repine or mourn over that which was lost. A private schoolroom was rented on Tenth Street, between Woodland and Russell Streets, about five blocks from the house we had left, and we began work in earnest. In this little band all were one—no one trying to force in any sort of inventions or innovations. We read the word of God and practiced as it required; we sung and prayed together,

took the Lord's Supper together, and were a happy little congregation.

In spite of all the opposition we had to encounter, we had a healthy growth from the start—at first, from brethren and sisters who moved near to us, and, later, from the world. All of us richly enjoyed the new work from its very foundation. We now have a substantial and comfortable house of worship on Tenth and Russell Streets, and have it well and comfortably filled regularly on Lord's-day mornings. We are doing an encouraging amount of missionary, or evangelistic, work, and are living in peace and harmony.

Some two years ago A. I. Myhr and the State society pitched a tent on the same block that Tenth Street Church is on, with James Small, a noted broad-gauge evangelist, for over a month. We went right on with our regular Lord's-day service and prayer meetings as usual while the tent meeting lasted, and are still regular in the work. This was a strange place to go to find the destitute, with a dozen churches of one name or another within bugle sound of their tent. Yet Myhr says their "purpose was, and is," to preach the gospel in destitute places. Why they should thus put their tent almost at the door of the Tenth Street Church and near a dozen other churches, including Woodland Street and Seventeenth Street Churches, within five or six blocks of their tent, is for them to harmonize with the published purpose of their society.

But we are satisfied that the trials we had in Woodland Street Church differ but little from things that have taken place in many dozens of other congregations, and that other similar ones

will yet take place in many others. None that are loyal to Christ and the teaching of the New Testament can afford to run with, or in any way be parties to, things in the work or worship of the church not authorized in the word of God.

We do not propose to impugn the motives or purposes of those who did the divisive work in Woodland Street Church; that is their responsibility. We know humanity is weak, and that it is easy for people to persuade themselves that a thing they really want to do is right. We leave that for them to settle with the great Judge of all the earth. But we cannot condone error as though it were truth, nor can we in any sense recognize human inventions as equal to God's expressed appointments, nor can we ever consent to regard anything right in the work or worship of the church that God has not plainly expressed in his word. We think there is nothing more displeasing to God than to add to or take from his word, or in any way to change or meddle with his divine appointments; and we never expect to cease to oppose such things.

The apostle Paul strongly reproved the church at Corinth because they condoned, allowed, fornication to go on in the church unrebuked. One of the members had taken his father's wife, and they had allowed him to go on in the church as though nothing were wrong. Paul not only rebuked them, but commanded them to deliver that man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, and said: "Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened." (1 Cor. 5: 7.) The influence of the man guilty of fornication was working like leaven in meal, was gradually corrupting the

church, and they were all becoming guilty before God for allowing it to go on unrebuked. For a church to condone such a thing makes them responsible before God for the wrong. Those in the church were losing their standing before God every day by allowing such an evil to exist among them. Hence, to purge out the old leaven was to withdraw from that wicked man, that they might thus free themselves from encouraging such corruption. They could not stand and worship as a pure church while allowing such corruption in their midst. To keep the passover, all leaven had to be put away from the homes of the Jews, and they were to eat only unleavened bread during that feast. The apostle alludes to that custom in this passage, and gives them to understand they must get rid of that great evil in the church, that it might thus be purified in the sight of the Lord.

He says in the next verse: "Wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." This means that they could not remain a pure congregation and allow such evil conduct to go on among them. No church to-day, therefore, can allow any sort of sin or violation of God's revealed order of things, and not themselves become guilty before God. If only a few loyal members are in a congregation where a large majority force things of human wisdom into the church, and the loyal ones cannot prevent it, they can easily withdraw from such a congregation and meet together at their own homes, or somewhere else, and worship God in spirit and in truth,

and thus start a new congregation that will be loyal to Christ; and it is certainly their duty to do so.

The few cannot afford to remain in rebellion against God because the masses do. When the apostle had written the above and other things to the Corinthians, they waked up, and quickly put away the evil, and showed themselves a willing people, ready to do the Lord's will. But if a majority of them had refused to put away the evil, it would have been the duty of all that were loyal to remonstrate earnestly with the majority, to induce them, if possible, to do the Lord's will as expressed to them. If they had utterly refused to do so, then the loyal minority could not have remained loyal had they continued to stay with them. They themselves would have become corrupt, and the whole lump a corrupt mass, and the whole body would have been rejected together. At Corinth the whole church put away the evil, and were commended for their subjugation to God's will. But in Woodland Street Church the majority determined to hold with the innovation, and could not be induced to give it up. The loyal ones, therefore, to remain loyal, were compelled to withdraw from the evil doers.

When John, in Revelation, wrote to the church at Ephesus by the command of Christ, that church was not wholly evil; but there were sins among them, in that they had left their "first love." The whole church was responsible for the wrongs. If all were not actually engaged in the errors, they were not protesting against them nor trying to have the errors put down, as is plain from the context. Hence, John was directed to tell them to "repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move

thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent." (Rev. 2: 5.) This shows that the whole church was responsible for existing evils, and that if they did not bring about a reformation, the downfall of that church was a certainty. The candlestick represented the church, and its removal represents the removal of the church at Ephesus.

The thing charged against them, that they had left their "first love," showed that the love they had at first, which led them to do God's will, was dying out, and they were beginning to follow human wisdom, or were failing in their service to God through lack of interest. But the passage rather indicates that they had begun to introduce untaught opinions, which always leads to the neglect of the will of God. At any rate, without getting back to the principles of obedience to God, the church at Ephesus was doomed; and history indicates that just that fate did come upon them, as the whole city of Ephesus went into ruin many centuries ago. So there is no safety for any of the Lord's people but to follow implicitly the word of God; and if at any time or place a majority would compel us to follow the wisdom of men in any part of God's service, it is our duty to step out from among them, that we partake not of their sins and receive not of their plagues.

CHAPTER XXIII.

My Early Life and Education.

I was born and reared in Overton County, Tenn., on the waters of Wolf River, within one mile of the Kentucky line, seven miles from Albany, the county seat of Clinton County, Ky., and twenty-one miles from Livingston, the county seat of Overton County. My father owned a pretty good farm, with bottom lands for cultivation and hill lands for timber, such as was needed to keep up the farm. Stephen and Annie Sewell were my father and mother. My father was born in North Carolina; but when he was about twelve years old, the family moved into Carter County, in East Tennessee, the county in which my mother was born and reared.

As they grew up they became acquainted, and this acquaintance ripened into love and marriage. After marriage they started toward the West, and, after a few stops, finally located for life on the above-named farm.

There were eight boys and six girls born into the family. One boy died in infancy, and one girl died in early youth. I never saw either one of these, as I was the youngest boy and next to the youngest child. The sister that died early was the oldest of the family. The other twelve all lived to be grown—seven boys and five girls. They have all

gone over the river now, except myself and next older brother, C. W. Sewell. He and the little one that died were twins, and were named Caleb and Joshua. All the boys, save one, had Bible names. Four of the number became preachers, and another was for years an elder in the church, and often a leader in the public worship of the congregation where he lived. We were all brought up to work on the farm, and not one of the boys ever tried to learn any other occupation, except school-teaching and preaching. We were all contented to work on the farm, and were a contented and happy family. As fast as the boys grew up to be large enough to use a hoe and handle a plow and drive a gentle horse they were put to regular work, and stuck to it till they were grown.

Our opportunities to obtain an education were very limited. There were no high schools of any sort in that section of country, and no scholars of sufficient advancement to have taught such a school. There was generally a free school in every district for about three months in the summer and early fall, and sometimes that period was half cut off for lack of public funds; and whenever the money gave out, the school closed, as they rarely ever thought of raising money to fill out the time or to extend into longer schools. In these schools English grammar was unknown in my early school days, and arithmetic was not required to be taught more than halfway through, and that but imperfectly. Hence, I got my start in English grammar at home, by studying it at night, in cold and bad weather in winter and rainy days and odd spells in summer, as one or two of the older children had gone from

home and had learned enough about it to teach me. In this way I went through Kirkham's Grammar, which, by the way, was a very good grammar in those days.

When nearly twenty-one, I hired a boy to work on the farm in my place to fill out my time till twenty-one, and I went off to school to an older brother and studied Brown's English Grammar and arithmetic—first under one brother till his school closed, and then under another brother at another place, making some five or six months. After this, it was no trouble for me to get a position as teacher in the common schools. Then I would work on the farm till time to open school in summer, and go to teaching school for the rest of the summer and fall.

This course was continued till I was twenty-three years of age, when, on November 22, 1853, it was my good fortune to be united in marriage to Lucy, daughter of Matthew and Henrietta Kuykendall, about five miles north of Cookeville, Tenn. I had just closed one term of school in Southeastern Kentucky when we were married, and taught another term at the same place during the winter and spring following. Then we moved to the home of Brother and Sister Kuykendall, my wife's father and mother. I went to plowing again, and helped to make one crop, then I was called away from the plow handles into the schoolroom again, where I taught two terms more. In the meanwhile I had contracted for a little piece of land, hired a man to cut and hew a set of house logs and to build us a house, that we might go to housekeeping in our own home.

But while these things were going on it was my lot to associate considerably with a cousin of my

wife, who had just graduated at Burritt College and was then teaching in the neighborhood where we were living. We talked educational matters over and over, till, as a result of that (and in my experience in teaching I had already felt the need of more education, and especially so in the matter of preaching, which I expected to continue through life), I became more anxious for a good education than I had ever been before. But how to accomplish it was the question. I did not have the means, and could not accomplish it without assistance. My father-in-law, I knew, was able to assist me; but I doubted whether, under the circumstances, he would favor such an effort or not, as he had but a limited education and was deeply interested in farming, and was making a decided success of it, and I hesitated for a time to say anything to him about it.

When I ventured to talk to him about the matter of a more extended education and the advantages I thought it would be to my future usefulness, to my joyful surprise and great gratification, he heartily assented, and that without a moment's hesitation, and said he thought it could be accomplished, and said he would give some assistance in the venture. This was one of the pleasantest surprises I had ever met, one for which I never expect to cease to be thankful. I knew he was not just at that time in condition to aid me in the way of money; but he always had on hand a great abundance of provisions, and he could always assist me in the way of meat and flour and such like, and I felt perfectly sure he would do so, which he did bountifully. Upon this assurance I at once changed the entire programme of my future life. So, by

agreement, my land contract with him was canceled, and he purchased my house material and assisted us in other ways to get ready for an undertaking that seemed to us just starting out in life—a very considerable and important one.

So, with a glad and thankful heart, I went to work to make the necessary arrangements for the accomplishment of the end, feeling assured that it would certainly add much to my ability to do good, especially in the matter of proclaiming the gospel of Christ to a perishing world. I greatly desired to be able to read and study the New Testament in the language in which it was originally written, that I might in greater confidence present the truth in the whole matter of Christianity. The fall term of Burritt College was then approaching its close for the year 1855. So, in company with Brother G. A. Kuykendall, who had greatly encouraged my going there to school, I went to attend the closing exercises, to consult with Brother W. D. Carnes, president of that school, and to see what arrangements could be secured for housekeeping there for my family. Brother Carnes encouraged me much in the undertaking. The closing exercises were very interesting and encouraging to me, as that was the first time I had ever been inside of college walls.

A house was rented and every arrangement was made for entering college at the beginning of the first term of 1856, which opened in the month of February. Brother Kuykendall sent wagons and teams to move us to Spencer, and sent provisions to last us for quite a while. We greatly appreciated the help and encouragement thus afforded us. These items may seem small in themselves, but, as

links in the chain of life, they are exceedingly important, all aiding in bringing about the much-desired end.

It required a good supply of faith on my part to shoulder and go through with such an undertaking. All told, I did not have anything like enough in the way of money resources to carry me through the college course I wanted to take, and could not tell where the rest was to come from; and, besides, our wants as to family expenses were increasing, everything I had gradually going out and nothing coming in. The prospect seemed a little gloomy, as every one that thinks of such a situation can easily see. But my faith was strong. I believed then, and still believe, that when a Christian starts out with an effort that is in harmony with the will of God, and will pursue the undertaking according to the word of God, there will be a way for reasonable success. I was strong in the assurance that my desire for more preparation to do greater good was a laudable one, and believed the Lord in his providence would help me if I proved faithful.

Thus the work was entered upon with earnestness and with strong confidence that good would result from it. But pulling through a course of Greek, Latin, and mathematics is no small matter, and often I felt as if it might be better to be out at work, rather than be shut up so long indoors, and apparently accomplishing so little. One or two others in the same school under similar circumstances did pull loose and go out to work again. But the thought of abandoning what I was so sure was a good purpose over difficulties that I knew others had overcome, would afford new courage, and

the effort was continued. But no one need ever enter upon such an undertaking with the supposition that there will be no troubles to encounter. Of course there will be imaginary troubles, but there will be real ones, and a man had better prepare for them, so that he may either overcome or endure them.

Strong faith and conscientious convictions are always needed in such undertakings, and a disposition to bear crosses and trials for the sake of accomplishing good. The thought of running aground financially, with a family on my hands and nothing to support them, was a serious one, and gave me much anxiety at times. It seemed likely enough for just such a thing to occur, when it was so plain we did not have anything like enough to carry us through, and not a cent of income, but a constant decrease of what we had. These things would not be mentioned but for the hope of encouraging others under similar circumstances to undertake and endure and go through with hardships, if need be, for the purpose of accomplishing good and of receiving good; for the man that does good always receives benefits by helping others. And in these matters no man can afford to be purely selfish; he must be willing to go through trials for the sake of becoming able to do good, and thus benefit others. There is, indeed, great comfort and pleasure to be derived from the exercise of strong faith in God and in his precious promises, and in the sweet anticipation of accomplishing good after a while. The man that cannot afford to suffer some trials and hardships for the sake of helpfulness to others will never accomplish much in life. With

endurance and perseverance we pressed on as the weary months and years moved on.

On one occasion, after spending a vacation with my wife's people and returning for the work of another session, we were hindered by the way, and dark overtook us just about the time we got to the foot of the high mountain we had to ascend to reach Spencer. No one was near we could stop with till morning, and it was about two miles up that long mountain road. There was no use to stop to parley over the difficulty, so we pressed right on. By walking in front, I could direct and lead the way till we got to the most dangerous place on the road. Now it was so dark that neither of us could see the road. I knew we were just at a piece of road dug out of the mountain side for perhaps a hundred yards, where, if the lower wheels should run off, the wagon would be certain to turn over, and perhaps tumble down a very steep descent for a hundred feet or more, with wife and babies all in the wagon together. Knowing the condition of the road, I took a stick in my hand, so I could tell when I was in the middle of the road, spread something white over my shoulders that the driver could see, and kept talking to him and directing till we got past the danger and landed safe in Spencer. It was a serious and exciting drive, and one never to be forgotten. Nor should one ever cease to be thankful for a safe journey through such dangers. I almost shudder yet when I think of that dark night, that dangerous drive, with the lives of my whole family at stake! Fifty years have come and gone, but the memory of that night remains. Through the mercies and watch care of Jehovah, all

our family that were in that drive still live ; but the driver on that occasion has long since passed over the river.

This incident over, we were soon poring over Latin, Greek, mathematics, and other things, as though there had been no danger. While we have some dark and unpleasant scenes in life, there is much that is bright, pleasant, and enjoyable to the faithful Christian who loves, serves, and trusts a faithful Creator.

With the exception of very few things, however, I enjoyed that siege of hard study and close confinement very much. All the time I was looking to the day when I expected to be able to take the field of labor with greatly increased ability to do good, and to be a greater blessing to wife and children, the church and the world, than it would have been possible for me to become without the education. For three years and a half the school-room was mainly my field, schoolbooks were my companions, and close, hard study was my employment. But teachers were kind and helpful, schoolmates were pleasant and companionable, there was a congregation of earnest Christians to meet and worship with on the first day of every week, and prayer meeting every Wednesday night, and a Bible class of the whole school every Lord's-day morning, led by President Carnes, all of which was not only profitable to me in living the Christian life, but was exceedingly enjoyable. The school, also, was opened and closed by reading the Scriptures and prayer every day. I had never had as constant religious opportunities and privileges before. These

were greatly enjoyed, and were certainly very advantageous and profitable.

From my own experience in securing an education, I have concluded there is no reason why any young man that wants an education should fail to secure it. Especially is this true of every young man who is a faithful Christian, imbued with an earnest desire to do good, who will go to work in strong faith, and will faithfully and trustingly work and pray along that line. God knows the heart, knows the purpose of one who desires to do good and to faithfully serve and honor him; he will so use his life as to make him useful, and cause him to be a blessing to himself and others. Let no one, therefore, despair, whose sole purpose is to honor God. On the other hand, from my observation and knowledge of human nature, when a boy is old enough to begin to choose and decide for himself, and does not really desire to study and prepare himself to do good, to be useful, all the help and effort bestowed upon that boy to induce him to study and secure an education will be thrown away. There must be a burning desire in a boy to do good, if there is ever much outcome in him.

But when I had completed two years and a half with Brother Carnes in Burritt College, there came an unexpected turn in affairs that very much upset my arrangements and calculations. I had my calculations all set to remain at old Burritt College to the end of my course. But as we approached the end of the two and a half years, Brother Carnes' residence was burned down and his household goods all consumed, and some of the family barely escaped with their night clothes. So he suffered a very

heavy loss. Brother Carnes thought the fire was of incendiary origin, and that he had some sort of hidden enemy that was trying to ruin him. He was so worried and disturbed over it that he decided to leave Burritt College, and accepted a high position in East Tennessee University, and made his arrangements to leave Burritt College at the close of that term. Then I did not know what to do next. The college fell into the hands of strangers to me, whom I did not wish to remain with, and I was thus totally at sea as to my future. So all of us went back to Brother Kuykendall's in blind uncertainty as to what I would do about finishing my college course.

We had not been back long, however, when I was informed that Brother T. Fanning and Brother William Lipscomb, of Franklin College, Tennessee, had proposed to take twenty young men who had begun preaching, had shown ability to do good, and expected to make preaching their life work, and give them board and tuition free. This proposition was looked into, the information found to be correct, and was thankfully accepted, and arrangements were at once begun to go there the first of September following. But before I could go there was another serious trouble to settle. That was as to what arrangements to make about my family during the ten months I should be in school. A separation from my wife and children, sad as it was to me and them, seemed inevitable, if I still clung to the idea of finishing my much-coveted college course, and to give up this ambition seemed almost unbearably sad. But not being able to make any money arrangements by which to pay the nec-

essary expenses of taking the family, something else had to be done.

The prospect was gloomy. But just at the right time another providence favored. An unmarried brother of my wife wanted to run a boarding house at Bloomington Springs for a school soon to open there, but had no one to superintend it. So he offered my wife room and board for her and our three children to superintend the boarding house for him. This apparently moved the last serious difficulty out of the way. So she accepted the offer. Then it was for me to hustle around and make the remaining arrangements to go, or give up the accomplishment of a very much coveted end. So, with sadness on the one hand and joyful anticipations on the other, the arrangements were made. Some money was borrowed to buy a few more books, and everything was arranged as best we could, and the time was up for the sad parting and the trip to the place. This college was about six miles from Nashville, in a first-class community, and was known to be a first-class school.

If I had learned more patience and all the time exercised more confidence in the promises of God—that his eyes are over the righteous, that his ears are open to their prayers, that all things work together for good to them that love God—there would have been much less sorrow over the sad disappointments. Thus it often occurs that out of sad disappointments our greatest blessings arise. So it turned out with me on this occasion. God's promises mean just what they say; and if the Lord's people would fully trust him, they might be saved from an immense amount of useless anxiety and trouble.

In looking back over my past life and the long chain of blessings that make up the precious opportunities of my life, I feel ashamed that I did not have more thought and appreciation of them at the time, and that I was not more thankful and grateful for them when they came. God gives opportunities, but it is man's business to utilize them and work all the good out of them that he is able. This much I realized, and tried to improve the precious opportunities granted to the best of my ability.

Franklin College was entered on September 1, 1858, and I was soon down to business in earnest. I was pleased from the very start with the school advantages and with the teachers. I had all the advantages I could utilize. I found the teachers well up on the text-books used and ready to give any advice or instruction needed; so it was simply for me to put in faithful and hard study, so as to derive all the benefits possible from the advantages afforded. Schools can afford opportunities for study, but the students have to do the studying if any benefits result. I industriously filled the study hours of that session, with the understanding that, if my advancement was all right, I could graduate at the close of that ten-months' session. I was admitted into the Senior Class, and worked with a will. While the work was arduous, I never spent a pleasanter session in any school than that session at Franklin College.

We were all blessed with reasonably good health, and, by using the mails pretty freely, we got along fairly well. The time was put in to good advantage till the Christmas holidays were at the door; then books and Greek and Latin were laid

aside, and I was off with sweet anticipation to see wife and babies. Joyful, indeed, was this brief reunion. Then back to hard study again. When about four months more of hard study had been completed, I had finished up the Latin and Greek course, and had made a pretty good start in Hebrew. Then Brother Fanning said my course was so well finished up that there would be no trouble for me to graduate, that he would stand for me in the examination before the trustees, and that, if I preferred, I could go home to get up my graduating address and return for commencement. This was another joyful occasion for me, and no more time was wasted than to get ready for the next stage-coach in the direction of home. Another joyful meeting and pleasant stay of three or four weeks, and back again to the closing exercises and to receive my diploma.

These exercises were about the close of the first week of June, 1859. In the graduating class were five young men, including myself, and two young ladies. The young men were: J. S. Poyner, Robert E. Powell, Wallace Powell, E. G. Sewell, and G. M. Atkerson. The young ladies were Eleanor R. Hill and Sarah A. Harris. This ended my days of going to school. Those three and a half years of college life have ever since been regarded by me as an exceedingly important part of my life work.

While it is true the confinement seemed long, and the responsibility I had taken upon me was great, there has never been one moment of regret that it was undertaken and persevered in to the end. On the other hand, I have never ceased to be thankful that it could be done, was done; thankful there was

a Burritt College and a Franklin College, and for all the aid so kindly afforded in and by these schools and their kind teachers, and for the health and strength with which I was blessed in laying this foundation for future usefulness. So far as I can now remember, I did not lose even a day from study by being sick. The good done by those two schools will never be fully known and estimated this side of eternity. But while good health continued with me in the main, my weight was reduced to one hundred and sixteen pounds from long confinement and hard study, and I was somewhat round-shouldered from stooping over books so long, and had a serious spell of illness in the fall of that year, after having held one or two laborious protracted meetings in close succession, the work being too much all at once after the long confinement at hard study. But gradually flesh and strength returned; yet it was years before very full and vigorous health and vigor were regained.

While the three years and a half of confinement seemed a long time to be penned up in college walls, almost entirely cut off from outside labor in the wide and open field, I have had already forty-nine years in which to use the benefit of the education obtained, and hope for a little more time yet to work. So I feel many times repaid for the labor, time, self-denial, and hardships incurred. I write these things that I may encourage other young men to attempt similar and greater things, as facilities for such undertakings are so much greater and opportunities for their accomplishment so much more abundant than when I made the attempt. There is no reason why any young man of reasonable tal-

ent should not accomplish much greater things, with the enlarged and greatly improved opportunities of this twentieth century.

But I cannot afford to close this chapter without a word to the credit of my faithful companion and the great assistance she gave me in the accomplishment of the important work undertaken. She uncomplainingly went with me to Spencer, and, without other assistance than I could give her, kept house and took care of the babies, and, as I sometimes express it, "boarded me and sent me to Burritt College for two years and a half." She cheerfully made out with the plainest wardrobe for herself and the children, making up the clothing for herself and them, and did it cheerfully and without complaint. Had she been disposed to try to follow society ways, and increased expenses as such a life would have demanded, it would have been impossible for me to have gone to college or to have done much of anything else but to have tied down to the best employment I could have found to pay the bills. She had been trained up to practical life, and took a practical view of things, and was, indeed, a helpmeet to me through the whole struggle, and thus enabled me to go through with the undertaking. Hence, in a large measure, I owe my success to her self-denial and economical life. Also, the church and the world are largely indebted to her for whatever good I have been able to accomplish during all these years.

Nor would I fail to render due honor to the memory of Brother W. D. Carnes, Brother T. Fanning, and Brother W. Lipscomb, for the substantial aid and the generous help and encouragement they gave

me while laying the foundation for greater usefulness through life. Many others besides these, too numerous to undertake to name, gave much encouragement all along the line. And especially do I desire to be truly thankful to the merciful Heavenly Father for the great blessings and the many precious opportunities of all my past life, and for using me so much and so long in the grand work of saving souls.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Religious Teaching and Practice in My Younger Days.

The only church in the neighborhood of my early youth was a Baptist Church, called the "United Baptists." They were different from the Missionary Baptists only in the matter of missionary societies and missionary operations. They differed from the Primitive or "Hardshell Baptists," as they were often called, on the doctrine of eternal decrees, of eternal election and reprobation. The association that the congregation of our neighborhood belonged to was called the "Stockton's Valley Association." There were twelve congregations, or churches, that belonged to this association. The association met once every year, with delegates from all the churches to report the condition of the churches and to represent their interests. These delegates would report the prosperity or adversity of the churches, and ask advice if they had any difficult matters among them they did not know how to manage. These associations did not propose to enact any laws, nor to formulate rules for the churches to go by, but to advise in cases where churches were in any wise infringing upon Baptist usages or were ignoring anything they thought important. The older and more influential heads would admonish, rebuke, or exhort churches they

thought were getting out of the way; and if these proved incorrigible, they ran the risk of being dropped out of the association.

When the writer was very young, some of the Baptists began to devise missionary societies and operations upon a money basis, and began what they called a "State Convention." The Stockton's Valley Association opposed this, and, in 1836, passed a resolution in the association declaring nonfellowship with the whole missionary business. This was known afterwards as the famous "Sixth Article" of their faith. This occasioned much discussion among the Baptists, which lasted for several years. In the association of 1842 it was proposed to rescind this famous Sixth Article. Much discussion ensued, and finally the vote was taken, and the churches were equally divided, six voting to do away with the Sixth Article. After much discussion, the association divided, half the churches going to the missionary side and half against it, and with the latter half the famous Sixth Article remained.

The general doctrines of both sides remained about the same. They all maintained the doctrine of hereditary total depravity—that, through the sin of Adam, the whole race of man became totally corrupt; that they could neither think nor perform a good act, and, therefore, were totally unable to understand and obey the word of God and thereby be saved; that conversion was impossible, except by a direct, abstract operation of the Holy Spirit. This supposed operation of the Spirit was counted essential to conversion, and this conversion was called "getting religion." Nothing short of this was called conversion among them. The idea of

conversion through obedience to the gospel on the part of the sinner was sneered at as mere book religion, as salvation by works and not by grace, and as an effort on the part of the sinner to save himself by his own works. To obey the gospel and thereby be saved was regarded by the preachers and members as being as impossible as for the leopard to change his spots or the Ethiopian to change his skin.

In their revival meetings, if they could not get the people excited and thoroughly under their influence, and get them to believe the power that was moving them was the operation of the Holy Spirit upon them, striving with them to convert them from sin, they could accomplish nothing toward their conversion. They did not try to convert them by preaching the gospel to them and urging them to obey it; for they said the word of God was a dead letter, and no power was in it to convert and save the sinner. They taught two dead things, both the sinner and the word of God which reveals the gospel to man; and of course one dead thing could not operate upon and save another that was equally dead. But when they could get the people excited by their pathetic and sympathetic preaching, and get them to think this excitement was the Spirit of God working upon their hearts to convert them, they could soon get up a rousing meeting; and as fast as they could get them to realize that they were in a lost condition, could not save themselves, and must give themselves entirely into the hands of the Lord and trust him to save them, the work of conversion, as they understood it, was soon accomplished; for they verily believed that the Holy

Spirit, working abstractly on the hearts of sinners, convicted and converted them.

When the meeting closed, they would appoint a day to "open the doors of the church for the reception of members," at which time the converts were expected to "join the church," which they generally did in the following manner. The converts were requested to take a seat convenient, while a number of brethren would be present to judge of the converts one by one, as to whether their conversion was genuine or not. Then the preacher would ask the candidates, one by one, to relate their experience in their conversion in the presence of the church or session of members. If the experience was satisfactory, corresponded with the feelings the brethren had had in their conversion, they were voted as fit subjects for baptism and church membership. Baptism with them was simply the door into the visible church, as they had already entered the invisible church by their supposed conversion by the Holy Spirit; they were already saved and would be saved in heaven without baptism, but it was proper to be baptized and enter and live in the visible church. The evidence of their pardon was a matter of feelings, and must be the same sort of feelings the brethren had when they were converted. We visited many of these get-religion revival meetings in our boyhood days in the old neighborhood of home. In fact, we heard and saw little else in the matter of conversion till twelve or fifteen years of age, and even then heard no other sort of preaching for some time.

But incidents began from time to time to happen that involved another side to things; but I only

heard them talked about, having no opportunity to hear another side of the matter of conversion preached. The first thing that made a ripple upon the surface of the Baptist Zion of that community occurred in my father's family. My father and mother were prominent members of the Baptist Church for many years, and much the larger part of their large family of children were members. My father was long a deacon of that church, and my mother prepared and carried the emblems for the Lord's Supper, which, among them, was only twice a year. My father's house was a regular home for the preachers, and in protracted meetings and their associations they took care of large numbers who attended from a distance. Brother William B. Sewell, an older brother, was clerk of the church at that place and a prominent member among them; kept their articles of faith, kept the minutes of the business of the church and the record of names and such like, and was decidedly useful among them. But after a while he married a member of the church of Christ, went occasionally with his wife to her meetings, heard their preaching, read and investigated the Scriptures, and soon saw they were teaching and practicing as he read it in the New Testament. He was impressed with their plain teaching and practice, saw it was just as the teaching and practice of New Testament times, and so he took the Lord's Supper with them. This fact was quickly reported to the church. He was cited to trial, charged with violating the rules of the church, and was speedily excluded, though pleading with them to try him by the word of God or by their articles of faith; that if they could show he had violated

either one, he would retract. But it was of no use. He had violated Baptist rules of close communion, and that was enough, and out he went.

This stirred up considerable discussion about his communing with schismatics, a little later called "Campbellites." But those things had not been preached in that neighborhood then, and but little was known of those people, anyway, as my brother was living out of the neighborhood where he committed the offense. Even Brother Jesse L. Sewell, who was already reading and studying the Bible, but had not specially studied these points, told William he thought he had made a mistake. "Well," said William, "show it to me in the New Testament, and I will surely give it up." But he continued to study and investigate, and also had frequent discussions with William, which finally convinced Jesse that William and the people he was with were following the word of the Lord. So he began preaching the same things on conversion that the people were teaching with whom William had communed. Then he, also, was taken up and excluded under the charge of preaching the heresy of Alexander Campbell.

This caused still more talk about the "new heresy," as it was called. As a matter of emphasis to these things, Jesse had pressed the church into changing the record they had made, that he was excluded for preaching heretical doctrine, into this: "Excluded for preaching faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins." This was just such a record as was never made in that church before. But it did not stop with the exclusion of Jesse; Brother Isaac Sewell and two or three of

our sisters at once had their names taken off. But my father and mother still remained among the Baptists, though all the time getting their eyes opened more and more to the plain teaching of the word of the Lord. Jesse, with others who stepped out when he was excluded, started a little congregation in the same neighborhood, began meeting regularly, taking the Lord's Supper regularly on the first day of the week, with frequent preaching also.

My mother began to attend the meetings occasionally, heard the preaching, saw they taught and practiced as taught in the word of God, took the Lord's Supper with them, and was herself excluded for violating the rules of the Baptist Church—not for violating the word of God; this was not the question at all. Then my father arose, almost too full to talk, and said: "Brethren, you have been excluding my family, one after another, not for violating the word of God, but by outside opinions and rules made by men. I cannot remain with you any longer. Take my name off." This was done, they being the last of the family out of that church, save my oldest living sister, who moved away about that time and was never with the family any more. So she remained a Baptist until death, dying at the ripe age of eighty-nine years.

These things made quite a shaking up in the church, in the family, and in the community. My father and mother took membership with the little congregation of Christians in the neighborhood, and thus the members of the family that had been Baptists were happily united again simply as Christians. Brother Caleb, my next older brother, obeyed the gospel and was with them, as did also

Fatima, my youngest sister. Isaac and Caleb also began preaching, and the light of truth was growin~ and spreading round about.

While these things were going on, and early in the nineteenth year of my life, I became decidedly interested in the matter of salvation, but up to that time had never studied the Bible very much. Three older brothers were preaching the gospel as they read it in the New Testament, and at the same time an uncle was preaching the Baptist theory of conversion, and it could be plainly seen there was a clash. My study of the Bible was not sufficient to justify me in saying one was right and the other wrong. I was not willing to accept anything till satisfied it was the teaching of the New Testament. Early in the spring of that year (1849) a careful reading and study of the New Testament began. The work was slow, as the busy season was on and the plow had to run. But little reading spells were utilized during rains, and all little odd times as they offered were used in that way. As the reading progressed, the desire to read more increased, and the plainer the gospel plan of salvation appeared, and the more plainly I could see whether the preaching done was according to the Book or not. The New Testament was read through that summer and fall, much of it a second time, and Acts of Apostles the third time, by the latter part of October of that year. You may say that was slow reading; but, remember, the world was not running as fast then as now, and a boy that closely follows his plow through the busiest season of the year has not very many leisure hours. But, anyway, the reading was done, and the reader was happy, be-

cause he saw what the Lord required him to do, and was determined to do it.

Early in the week before the fourth Lord's day, in October, Brother J. L. Sewell, who then lived out of the neighborhood, was at my father's, and was requested to be sure to be at the meeting on the next Lord's day, that I wanted to obey the Savior. He readily and gladly said that he would. Word was sent out in the neighborhood that he would be there, and on the fourth Lord's day in October, 1849, I was buried with the Lord in baptism. This was a grand day and event to me. It was plain that, to become a Christian, one must believe the gospel, must repent and be baptized to reach the promise of remission of sins. These had now been done with deep earnestness and the promise of pardon received in full faith that I was a child of God, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ; and to this day I am perfectly satisfied that I did just what the Lord requires all sinners to do in order to be saved. If all would carefully learn what the word of the Lord requires, and do that, division on the matter of becoming Christians would soon cease. So, from my own reading, I was compelled to turn away from all the teaching of the early years of life. But when the truth so plainly dawned, that was enough. So I began at once to walk in it, and have been trying from that day to this to do just as the word of the Lord directs.

As well as memory serves as to dates, a little more than a year after coming into Christ a new door was opened for work of a public character. When Isaac and Caleb had commenced preaching, they began holding family worship in the home every

night. One of them would read a chapter after supper, the family would sing a song together, all would kneel down together, and one of the young preachers would lead in prayer. I never expect to forget those evening services of that family band. Those scripture readings, those songs and family devotions, hold a pleasant and precious place in the memories of the old home. But after a while those two preachers left home to teach school about the same time, and the sweet family devotions stopped short. But this did not last long, till my mother said: "We ought still to have family worship. True, Isaac and Caleb are gone, but we ought not to give it up." It was plain what this meant. My father had not undertaken that sort of service, and it was clear it was meant for me. I thought it over, and determined upon an effort on that line. That was the beginning of any sort of public service by me. It was embarrassing at first and blunderingly done, but it was continued. This is one of the good things a Christian mother can do. Thanks to God for Christian mothers! I never expect to cease to be thankful that I was blessed with such a one. How much of what I have done that is good and useful resulted from that mother's influence, I shall never be able to tell. Tears of thankfulness still come into my eyes sometimes when I think of her godly life and her influence in the home, the church, and the community.

The next step of public life I undertook was on this wise. Brother Isaac had an appointment to preach one night in the week at a neighbor's house, and was sick when the time came, and could not go. He asked me to go and tell the people

why he was not there. I went, read a chapter, prayed, and dismissed the audience. The next step was to accept an invitation to meet with a preacher at another neighbor's house on Saturday night and assist him, which I did, and talked a while. The next day I read a passage and talked a while at the meetinghouse with the same preacher. These efforts were not much, but they were a start toward preaching. These were opportunities, and were utilized, and that sort of work has never been given up since. The young should always be careful to use every opening to do good. Using these little opportunities develops and prepares for greater ones, and they are often the beginnings of grand and useful lives.

These little events were in the latter part of the year 1851, two years after I became a Christian. One year after this I was ordained as a preacher, as it was then thought a man did not have the right to baptize people or officiate at the Lord's table till thus ordained, which was by fasting, prayer, and laying on of hands. I do not now understand that this was either necessary or scriptural. But we all thought then that it was essential, and, therefore, it was done. Many people think so yet.

From the above two efforts at preaching I soon had established the habit of preaching on Lord's days, and working on the farm or teaching school through the week for a living. The idea of compensation for preaching was not thought of then. The Baptists had taught from time immemorial that it was wrong to preach for money and wrong to pay preachers, and almost everybody accepted the idea and acted on it as a matter of course. So none

in that country in those days undertook preaching as a means of making a living. Among our brethren they began purely from a desire to do good. Among the Baptists they began preaching because they thought the Lord had called them to preach, and that woe would be to them if they did not preach. So none of the preachers went into it from a money consideration. Some other consideration moved them to it. When I had been preaching for a time, I held a few days' meeting and baptized two or three persons; the brethren gave me three dollars and a half, the first money that was ever offered me for preaching, and it was a great surprise.

These items concerning my early teaching and surroundings, my reading and studying the word of God, my conversion by it, and the very radical change from all my former teaching and examples are written to show how thoroughly the word of God will take a man away from opinions, human wisdom, and devices of men in religion, and how easily it will bring about unity and harmony among all that will read and practice the word of God as it stands on record. It was simply reading and practicing the word of God that brought the Sewell family out of the errors under which they had been reared and taught, and planted them firmly upon the truth as recorded in the word of God. It was just that which turned loose four preachers, besides all the other earnest workers that were developed in and out of the family, a result brought about by the same causes. Four sons of J. L. Sewell also made preachers of the very same truths that brought the rest of us into it, and some of his grandsons later. How many other workers, both in pub-

lic and private, have been developed from the influences started by these few persons reading, studying, and practicing the word of God as related in the cases above named, will not be known this side of the day of judgment. It shows people should never despise the day of small things. If these had not been firm and had not stood firmly on the word of God when they read it, they would have died in obscurity and been forgotten. Others might have risen and done the work, but the Sewells would not have been known in it, save for their loyalty and faithfulness to the truth as they read and learned it.

All should learn early to think for themselves in religion; but they should read the word of God, decide what that teaches, and then stand by it, and allow nothing to take them from it. Too many do their thinking on human opinions and inventions of men, and decide which they prefer, and then stand by these till doomsday, without ever studying the word of God at all. They settle in their minds that one church is as good as another, make their choice, and settle down that way, and all the world cannot move them. In this way divisions are made and perpetuated.

If there is any one trait that distinguished the Sewell family more than any other, it was in going direct to the fountain head, the word of God, there to read, study, and learn what it says; to accept that in full faith, stand by it, and live by it the rest of their lives. They studied the word of God till they could so use it as to make the book explain itself, could use it in its proper connection and division, and so place it before opponents that they had to

fight the plain word of the Lord as he gave it. It is easy enough to fight and oppose opinions of men; but when it comes to fighting against the sharp, two-edged sword of God's truth, it is a very different thing, and is a hard and dangerous battle. To undertake to offset one opinion by another is poor business, and no triumph can be made at it that is worth the making.

The Sewells from the very outset read the word of God, and planted themselves firmly upon it, and no enemy could drive them from it. Men could vote majorities and exclude them from their churches, but they could not exclude them from God's holy word. They still had the Bible, and every time they opened it the very same words were there, meaning still the very same things. The same God and Father of all, the same Lord Jesus Christ, and the same Holy Spirit were there, teaching the same grand, eternal truths, and they could still be children of the same Father and the disciples of the same Lord, and still trust the great and precious promises of that Book of all books. This was the one trait that made them successful in the conflicts with error through which they had to pass. They relied upon the word of God; they believed it, loved it, read it, and used it, and it was the power of God working through them, for they used that as their reliance and guide in fighting the Lord's battles.

Human strength is but weakness when fortified only by human opinions; but the man that reads, practices, uses, and relies upon the word of truth, has the strong arms of Jehovah round about him, and in so doing is always safe. Let all young men

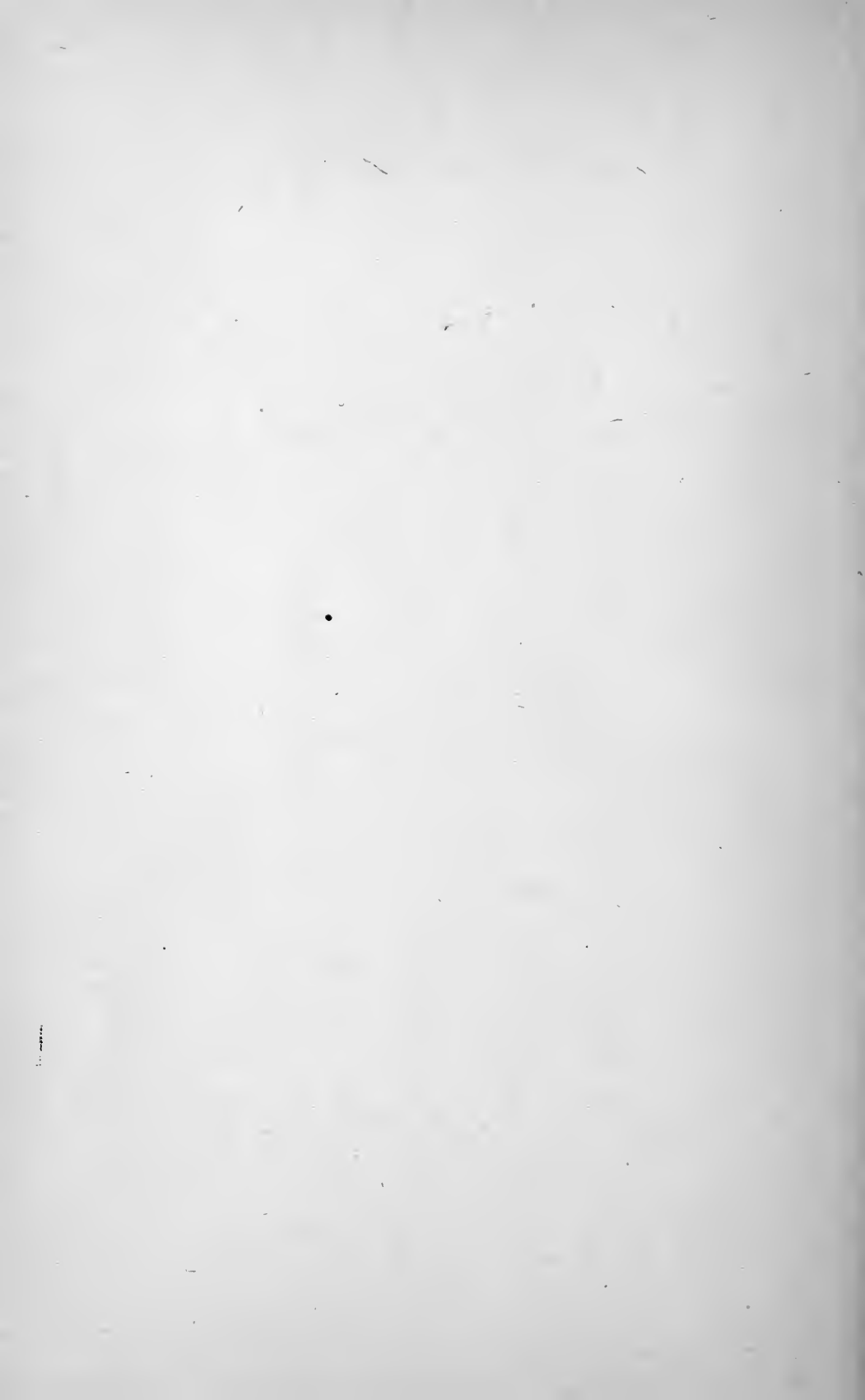
that want to be useful be sure to read and study the Scriptures, and form their convictions and faith upon that, and keep clear of all human opinions, all fads and fancies of men, and not allow them **any** place in their work; never receive nor try to impress them, but cleave alone to the word of God, live by it in their own lives, and faithfully and honestly teach it, and the Lord will use them to the full extent of their ability. But he that seeks for popularity among men, panders to popular opinions, will be weak in the sight of the Lord, no matter what his ability may be in human wisdom. Error may lead such, and may give them success along that line; but the Lord will not be in their work, and at the last day he will say: "I never knew you." In order to true success, a man wants to be in Christ, and Christ must be in his life.

Abraham made himself the friend of God by doing what God said do, and God led him and blessed him and fulfilled all his promises to him, and we are to-day enjoying one of the richest promises ever made to mortal man, a promise made to Abraham and fulfilled in the gift of Christ Jesus our Lord. No grander work was ever done by any man than that done by the apostle Paul. God was with him, and blessed him and used him, because he earnestly loved and faithfully served the Lord in his life work after becoming a Christian. He expresses all in a few words when his life on earth was about to close. He said: "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the right-

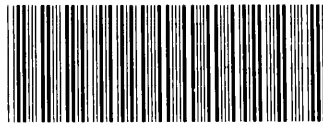
eous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing." (2 Tim. 4: 6-8.) This was a glorious ending to a godly and faithful life, and just such an ending as is possible to-day for every man that will live and serve God as Paul did. This ought to encourage all to give their hearts and lives to the service of God in such earnestness as to make sure of that crown of glory at last; and all that will be as diligent and faithful as Paul was in the service of God will be blessed with the sort of outcome that blessed him, with the same eternal life to be enjoyed.

The principal part of my life as a preacher and writer has been so prominently before the public that I do not think it needful to enter into details regarding it. I only wish to say that the Bible has been the companion and the standard book of my whole life work, and is still my guide in all matters of service to God and in all matters of duty to my fellow-man. I have tried to make it the light of home and the guide in the treatment of my family and in the whole work of life. When dark shadows have come, the precious promises of that book have been my support and comfort. When the world and its pleasures and treasures have strongly appealed to the fleshly man, I have used the plain and precious teaching of that book, above all other books, as my defense. If sensitiveness, selfishness, jealousy, or improper emulations have found too much prominence in my thoughts, that heavenly book in its divine teaching has been my reliance in putting them down. If, on the other

hand, there have been seen in my life things that are pure, are lovely and beautiful ; if there has been in my life sterling usefulness, I want the credit of it all to be given to that glorious, God-given book. And as the shades of evening gather, and the weakness of age begins to make the physical man tremble, that sacred book, its heavenly light and its precious promises, shall be my staff, my hope, my guide, till the pall of death shall bring the end, that angels may then take charge and waft my spirit home.



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